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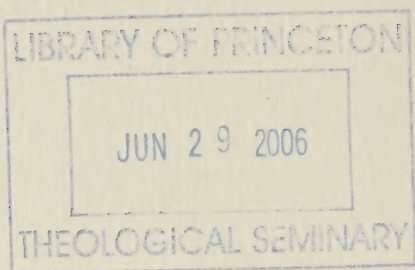


**IN MEMORY OF WILHELM PAUCK  
(1901 - 1981)**



UNION PAPERS NO. 2  
November 1982





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In memory of Wilhelm Pauck  
(1901-1981)

# IN MEMORY OF WILHELM PAUCK (1901-1981)

MEMORIAL NOTICES, LITURGICAL PIECES,  
ESSAYS AND ADDRESSES

Edited by

David W. Lotz



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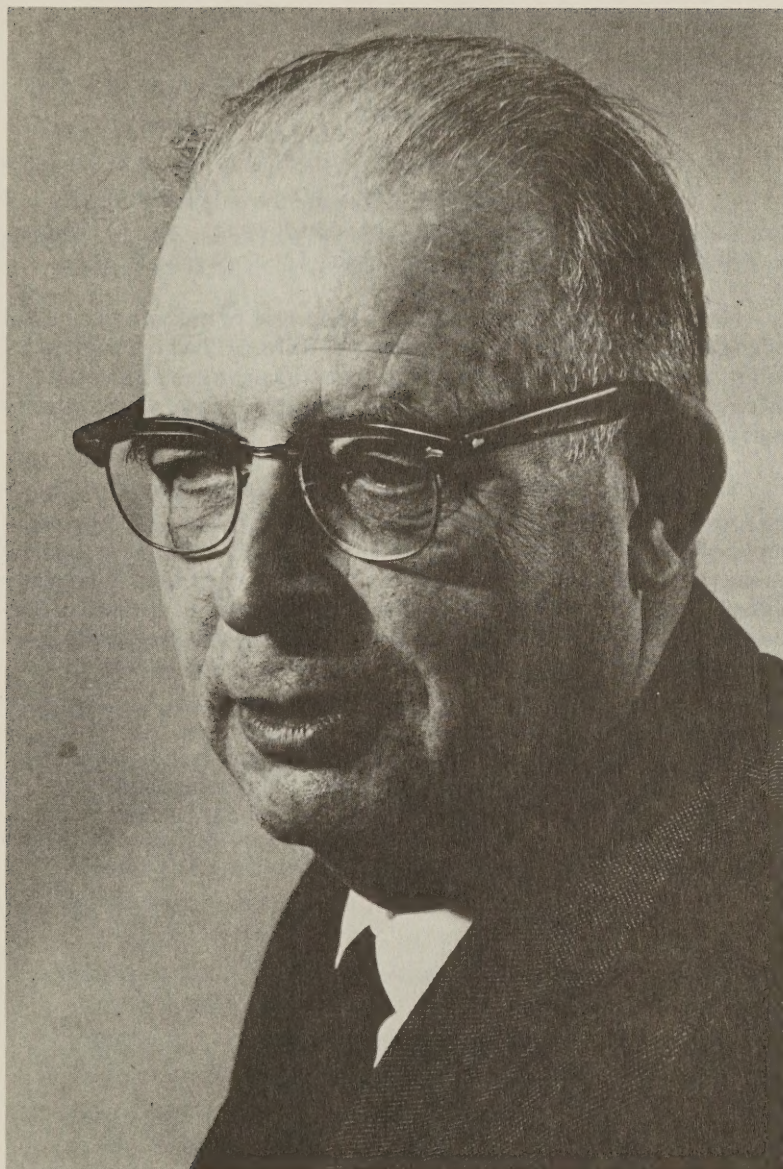
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

UNION PAPERS NO. 2  
November 1982

A series of papers published occasionally for the alumni/ae  
and friends of Union Theological Seminary, New York







credit: John H. Popper

WILHELM PAUCK  
January 31, 1901-September 3, 1981

## Foreword

Emerson to the contrary, institutions are the lengthened shadows of many faithful persons. Some do cast longer shadows than others, however, and Wilhelm Pauck was one of them at Union Theological Seminary.

His writings on the Reformation were a part of my own theological training, but I never sat in one of his classes. Instead, I had the privilege of coming to know him in the years after his retirement from the faculty of this school. I am now an inheritor of his former presence, which remains tangible in our place.

This collection of tributes to Professor Pauck is a token of a larger reservoir of unspoken gratitude for his teaching ministry among many people who knew him and many who did not. One did not have to know him personally in order to benefit from the legacy he left in this and many another school. For a long time to come at Union, we shall think of him when we acknowledge all those other members of the *Sanctorum communio* "who, though dead, yet speak" to their successors.

Donald W. Shriver, Jr.  
President of the Faculty and  
William E. Dodge Professor  
of Applied Christianity



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## Introduction

David W. Lotz

This little book honors the memory of one of the great theological teachers of our time, Wilhelm Pauck, who died in Palo Alto, California, on September 3, 1981, in his eighty-first year.

For over fifty of his years Professor Pauck exercised the historical theologian's craft with rare learning, zeal, winsomeness, and wit. In so doing he achieved international repute as a Luther scholar and Reformation historian, and as a transmitter to North America of the grand tradition of historical and theological scholarship in which he had been trained in his native Germany.

What Ernst Troeltsch, Karl Holl, and Adolf von Harnack were to Wilhelm Pauck, he was, in turn, to us: the exemplar of a way of doing theology that seeks to be faithful to the Christian gospel and truthful to the modern world, that endeavors to speak responsibly to its time out of its biblical and Reformation heritage, that aims to be at once critical and conserving and so to eschew both fundamentalism and iconoclasm. Such a mode of theology is justly called "historical theology," and for two generations Wilhelm Pauck was preeminent among its practitioners.

That these are not private expressions of filial devotion is borne out by the materials here published. Here a veritable chorus of voices is raised, by members of his own generation no less than of a later one, testifying that Wilhelm Pauck remains unforgettable as a teacher, scholar, counselor, colleague, and friend. Here also are reminders that he, of all people, never expected or welcomed such encomia. No doubt that is why they are now so freely given.

For fourteen years Wilhelm Pauck served on the faculty of Union Theological Seminary. It was here that he wrote and edited most of the books for which he is best known, and trained a goodly number of church historians, theologians, ministers and educators. No sooner had word been received here of his death than plans for a memorial service were begun, under the able direction of his long-time friend, Professor Robert Seaver. That service was held on November 6, 1981, in the James Memorial Chapel.

Already at that time suggestions were forthcoming that the relevant materials from the service be published for a wider audience, and I was asked to draw them together. It seemed fitting and proper to include other items as well, specifically the papers that had been delivered in honor of Professor Pauck's eightieth birthday at the annual meeting of the American Society of Church History in December, 1980.

No single academic institution, moreover, could justly claim Wilhelm Pauck as exclusively its own. Twenty-seven of his years were passed in Chicago as an illustrious teacher at the Chicago Theological Seminary and the University of Chicago. For another five years he taught at Vanderbilt University, and ended his career as an emeritus teacher at Stanford University. How appropriate, then, that notice should also be taken of some of the words written and spoken in his memory by representatives of these schools.

Thanks to the good graces of Mrs. Marion Hausner Pauck and of Professor Joseph Sittler it has also been possible to include the delightful address that Dr. Sittler delivered in Wilhelm Pauck's honor in 1968, on the occasion of the presentation of the Pauck Festschrift.

Let me express heartfelt thanks to all the contributors to this memorial volume, as well as to a group of donors whose generous gifts have helped to defray the cost of its publication. I am especially indebted to Ms. Joanna Roy of the Seminary's Office of Development for her invaluable assistance.



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## 1.

WILHELM PAUCK (1901-1981)

MEMORIAL MINUTE AND NOTICES



Wilhelm Pauck, 1926 (in the U.S.A.)



Memorial minute from the *Minutes* of the Faculty of Union Theological Seminary, 28 October 1981, entered by Professor Robert T. Handy:

For fourteen of his eighty years, Wilhelm Pauck served as Professor of Church History at Union Theological Seminary. As soon as he arrived in 1953, he took his place as a major force in the life of the Seminary.

Born in Laasphe, Westphalia, on January 31, 1901, Pauck studied at the universities of Göttingen and Berlin, receiving his Licentiate in Theology, *magna cum laude*, from the latter in 1925. Among his professors were Ernst Troeltsch, Karl Holl, Adolf von Harnack, and Karl Barth. Coming to the United States as an exchange student at Chicago Theological Seminary in 1925, he won a place on its faculty the next year as Instructor and, in 1931, as Professor of Church History. In 1928 he was ordained a Congregational minister. He was named Professor of Historical Theology at both Chicago Theological Seminary and the Divinity School of the University of Chicago in 1939, thus becoming part of the Federated Theological Faculty when it came into being three years later. In addition, in three more years he became Professor of History at the University.

In 1953 he accepted the call from Union; it did not take students and colleagues long to discover that they had secured not only a leading scholar of the Reformation and of the History of Christian Thought, but a great classroom lecturer. His vast breadth of knowledge, his keen sense of the dramatic, his inexhaustible fund of stories which somehow grew in appeal with the retelling, his genuine concern for others, his ability to maintain eye-contact with his audiences, and his skill in temporarily identifying himself with some giant of the past whom he was bringing to life again—all these combined to make him a compelling platform figure. A master at the podium and the seminar table, he also was skilled as a director of dissertations, and as advisor to students and faculty alike.

One of Pauck's reasons for leaving Chicago after twenty-seven years was to move away from heavy committee and administrative burdens; when he took his place on the Union faculty he found himself on the Graduate Study Committee, the Library Committee and its sub-committee on the Ecumenical Library, the Joint Committee on the Ph.D. in Religion, and on Columbia's Faculty of Political Science as Seminary representative. Two years later he was relieved of two of these assignments, only to find himself instead placed on three others: the Executive Committee, the Educational Policy Committee, and the *ad hoc* Committee on Playground

Noise. On certain occasions in addressing some point under discussion, if he happened to be against a measure it were best to bury it for at least several years; if he were for it his advice often prevailed.

To students and colleagues alike, our Charles A. Briggs Professor of Church History, a title bestowed on him in 1960, transmitted his vast scholarly knowledge of the Reformation. In a 1968 Festschrift in his honor, *Interpreters of Luther*, editor Jaroslav Pelikan declared that "it may be that some future historian will regard it as Wilhelm Pauck's most important scholarly achievement to have continued in the New World and transmitted to a new generation the interpretation of Luther and of the Reformation that had emerged from the historical and theological work of the first half of the twentieth century." When John Bennett, Dean and then President of the Faculty during Pauck's years, paid his tribute to his friend, he said, "Your years at Union were a blessing to us all in so many ways. Your academic leadership and your influence as a scholar were superb. You kept prodding the faculty in your inimitable way to keep up its standards and you stimulated the students, especially our graduate students, to do so for themselves. Your lectures were always a wonderful combination of the results of your own great interest in all things human. You could not be uninteresting if you tried." Following his retirement from Union, Pauck continued his career of scholarship and teaching, first as Distinguished Professor of Church History at Vanderbilt for five years, then as emeritus teacher in the Department of Religious Studies at Stanford University.

Among his publications were *Das Reich Gottes auf Erden* (1928), *Karl Barth: Prophet of a New Christianity?* (1931), *The Heritage of the Reformation* (1950, revised and enlarged, 1961), a new translation of *Luther: Lectures on Romans* (1961), *Harnack and Troeltsch: Two Historical Theologians* (1968), and, with Marion Hausner Pauck, *Paul Tillich: His Life and Thought* (1976). He served terms as President of the American Society of Church History, the American Theological Society, and the American Society for Reformation Research, and was honored with five honorary doctorates during his long and brilliant career, which terminated in Palo Alto on September 3, 1981. The Faculty of Union Theological Seminary records its sorrow at the passing of this great teacher and scholar, and also its thankfulness to God for his long and rich life and for his presence here during a significant part of it.

Memorial notice accompanying The Wilhelm Pauck Memorial Lecture (delivered by B. A. Gerrish) at The Divinity School of The University of Chicago, 12 February 1982, prepared by Professor Jerald C. Brauer:

Wilhelm Pauck spent the major share of his academic career in Chicago, where he first arrived as a graduate student at Chicago Theological Seminary in 1925. In 1926, he was appointed Instructor in Church History at that institution, but offered courses also under the auspices of The Divinity School. In 1931, he was promoted to Professor of Church History at Chicago Theological Seminary, and in 1939, he was appointed Professor of Historical Theology in both Chicago Theological Seminary and The Divinity School of The University of Chicago. When the Federated Theological Faculty came into existence in 1943, Wilhelm Pauck was one of its major supporters, a role which he continued until his departure for Union Theological Seminary in 1953. He also served as a professor in the History Department of the University from 1945 to 1953. Professor Pauck retired from Union Theological Seminary in 1967, having served as the Charles A. Briggs Graduate Professor of Church History since 1960. He served for five years as a Distinguished Professor of Church History at Vanderbilt University until 1972, and then joined the Stanford faculty in the Department of Religious Studies as an emeritus teacher.

Wilhelm Pauck exemplified in Chicago the very best of German *Wissenschaft*, in which he was trained in the great German universities. One of the most brilliant lecturers in the University, his classes were a paradigm for academic excellence; his scholarly acumen and vast knowledge were balanced by a keen wit and a dramatic flair in presentation. Pauck's adeptness in the lecture hall was matched by his skill in advanced seminars and his demanding standards as an advisor on dissertations.

Wilhelm Pauck was thoroughly immersed in the administrative responsibilities of both theological institutions and of the University itself. He was deeply committed to the principles of federation and cooperation in theological education, and gave unstintingly of his time and effort in behalf of that concept. Advisor to several deans, he stood in the center of institutional life and was a bulwark of strength to his colleagues. On numerous occasions, he served on the Council of the University Senate, on special University committees, and on the Committee of the Council itself. He was the only theological faculty member invited to address the Annual Trustee Dinner for all University faculty—one of the most distinguished awards to be given a University faculty member. From the beginning of his career to the end, he was truly a University man.



Professor Pauck accumulated numerous honors, was author or co-author of ten books, and lectured widely throughout the United States and the world. The memory of Wilhelm Pauck and of his distinguished contribution to the profession in which he excelled will be preserved by the colleagues with whom he worked, by the historical theologians he trained over the years, and by all those who benefited from his writings and lectures. For this outstanding legacy to the world of theological and historical reflection, we commemorate today Wilhelm Pauck.



1903



Chicago, 1930-31

**Memorial notice in the Chicago Theological Seminary  
*Newsletter* (Winter 1982), entered by Dr. Victor Obenhaus:**

Many older graduates of CTS will remember with affection Professor Wilhelm Pauck who died September 3 at the age of eighty. He had been continuing to teach after a distinguished career that led from CTS to Union Seminary (N.Y.), to Vanderbilt and finally to Stanford. Pauck came to CTS as a twenty-year old German graduate student, and, after a single year at CTS, he was invited to fill a position in church history left vacant through the death of Professor [Henry H.] Walker.

Pauck's tenure at Chicago spanned both pre-federation and federation years. He played an important role in the life of the Seminary and in the University both as a distinguished scholar and a powerful classroom teacher. In his Chicago days, he was an interpreter of the new European theology to a theological and church culture shaped by modernism and liberalism. His first English-language book was a critical interpretation of the thought of Karl Barth (1931). In his Union days, he appears to have reasserted many of the values found in liberal theology. Always he was an ardent interpreter of the Reformation and especially of the thought of Martin Luther.

As a classroom teacher, Pauck's work was marked by vitality and enthusiasm. Dramatic, vigorous, at once humorous and thoughtful, Pauck could entertain, shock, stir, fascinate, luring many into the study of theology and its history. Apart from his own written work, Pauck made an enduring contribution to the American theological community through the graduate students he trained. He wanted theological students to have "guts," to be able to answer back, to stand on their own feet in debate and argument. Those who were not overpowered by his presence found him a helpful and encouraging mentor.

Wilhelm Pauck left his mark upon the Seminary, and upon those who sat at his feet. We note his passing with respect and profound appreciation for his many gifts and contributions.

**Memorial notice in the September 1981 *Newsletter* of the  
Department of Religious Studies, Stanford University,  
entered by Professor William A. Clebsch:**

Wilhelm Pauck, Professor of Religious Studies and History at Stanford since 1972, died on September 3, 1981, in his eighty-first year after a long illness. By his critical acuity and prodigious learning he improved the work of the great historians of Christianity who taught him, including Ernst Troeltsch and Adolf Harnack. He had taught at the University of Chicago, Union Theological Seminary, and Vanderbilt Divinity School before coming to Stanford. His books include editions of Luther, Melancthon, and Bucer, interpretations of the Protestant Reformation, and works about the thought of such modern theologians as Karl Barth and (co-authored with Marion Hausner Pauck) Paul Tillich. Pauck's original style of teaching abashed and inspired his students because he demanded first of himself, and therefore of them, a combination of erudition and imagination. The Department is richer for his contribution even as it is impoverished by his death.



with Olga Pauck, 1930



Chicago, 1937



2.

A SERVICE IN REMEMBRANCE AND RECOLLECTION

OF

THE REV. DR. WILHELM PAUCK

Charles A. Briggs Graduate Professor Emeritus of Church History

January 31, 1901-September 3, 1981

Union Theological Seminary

James Memorial Chapel

6 November 1981

JAMES CHAPEL      UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK      6 November 1981

MEMORIAL AND RECOLLECTION

A SERVICE IN MEMORY OF THE REV. WILHELM PAUCK, D. Theol., Litt. D.  
Charles A. Briggs Graduate Professor Emeritus of Church History

January 31, 1901 - September 3, 1981

Organ Voluntary: Two Chorale Preludes from The Orgelbüchlein      J. S. Bach  
"O Man, Bewail Thy Grievous Fall"  
"Hark, A Voice Saith All Are Mortal"

Greetings and Opening Sentences:      Donald W. Shriver, Jr.,  
President, Union Theological Seminary

Hymn:      "Our God Our Help in Ages Past"

The Old Testament Lesson:      Isaiah 40:1-11      Robert E. Seaver,  
Professor of Speech and Drama

A Reading, from Adolf von Harnack's Funeral Address for Ernst Troeltsch (1923)  
translated by Wilhelm Pauck      David W. Lotz,  
Washburn Professor of Church History

Anthem:      "Behold, How Throbs the Heavy Laden Breast"      J. S. Bach  
(from The St. Matthew Passion)  
Jonathan Rigg, Tenor

A Thanksgiving from Ursula Niebuhr:      Read by Hugh Van Dusen

Recollections of Wilhelm Pauck: Reformation Scholar      Jaroslav Pelikan,  
Sterling Professor of History, Yale University

Hymn:      "God of our Life, Through All the Circling Years"

Recollections of Wilhelm Pauck: Spiritual Advisor      Charles M. Nielsen,  
Professor of Historical Theology, Colgate-Rochester Divinity School

Recollections of Wilhelm Pauck: Colleague and Friend      Paul Louis Lehmann,  
Charles A. Briggs Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology

Anthem:      "How Lovely Is Thy Dwelling Place"      Johannes Brahms  
(from A German Requiem)

Prayers:      Robert T. Handy,  
Henry Sloane Coffin Professor of Church History

Hymn:      "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"

Benediction:      Donald W. Shriver, Jr.  
President, Union Theological Seminary

Choral Response:      "The Will of God Be Alway Done"      J. S. Bach  
(from The St. Matthew Passion)

Organ Voluntary:      Fugue in E Flat Major, BWV 552 (St. Anne)      J. S. Bach

William Whitehead, Organist

Friends are invited to meet Mrs. Pauck in the Narthex  
at the close of the service.

### Greetings and Opening Sentences

Donald W. Shriver, Jr.

We have come here today to give thanks for the life and work of Wilhelm Pauck, a distinguished scholar and professor of historical theology and a beloved colleague and friend.

From 1953 until his retirement in 1967, Dr. Pauck taught church history at Union Seminary, where he is remembered by Professor Roger Shinn as "a teacher of legendary proportions who combined irrepressible exuberance and scholarly distinction. His research was primarily in the Protestant Reformation, but he had a lively interest in the contemporary world. His legacy is partly in his writings, but even more in the generations of students whom he trained in historical scholarship."

We welcome you to this memorial and recollection of the life of our dear friend. Let us pray:

In the midst of life we are in death;  
from whom can we seek help?  
From you alone, O God,  
who by our sins are justly angered.  
Lord, you know the secrets of our hearts;  
shut not your ears to our prayers,  
but spare us, O Lord.

We give thanks to you, O Lord our God, for all your servants and witnesses of time past: for Abraham, the father of believers, and Sarah his wife; for Moses, the lawgiver, and Aaron, the priest; for Miriam and Joshua, Deborah and Gideon, and Samuel with Hannah his mother; for Isaiah and all the prophets; for Mary the mother of our Lord; for Peter and Paul and all the apostles; for Mary and Martha, and Mary Magdalene; for Stephen, the martyr, and all the martyrs and saints in every age and in every land. We remember before you this day our brother Wilhelm. We thank you for giving him to us, his family and friends, to know and to love as a companion on our earthly pilgrimage. In your boundless compassion, console us who mourn. Give us faith to see in death the gate of eternal life, so that in quiet confidence we may continue our course on earth, until, by your call, we are reunited with those who have gone before, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### The Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people is grass.

The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever.

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!"

Behold the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.



A Reading From Adolf von Harnack's Funeral Address for Ernst Troeltsch, 3 February 1923, translated by Wilhelm Pauck, *Harnack and Troeltsch: Two Historical Theologians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), pp. 117-127.

. . . What we are experiencing, what is happening round about us month after month in the common life as well as in our personal existence, compels even the most vital and optimistic one among us to look from life to death:

All we see changes;  
Day sinks into dusk;  
Joy has its own horror;  
And everything faces death;  
Suffering sneaks into life  
Secretly like a thief.  
We all must part  
From all we hold dear.

Yet even though we must ever look from life into death, we must also learn to look from death into eternity: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand for ever." To be sure, this only consolation which the prophet gives to us seems to be a bitter solace; yet it is a real and strong solace. Let it be such also to us . . . , for it was indeed the word and the spirit of God for which the deceased strove; he sought to lay hold of the permanent and eternal in the flux of the temporal, relative, and perishing. . . .

To overcome history by history—how often did he tell me in our conversations: "One must accept his destiny, love, and transform it into something better. What one's goal is to be and how one is to reach it is implied in this attitude." Petty carping or bickering are out—what is needed is the willingness to take risks and to purge and refine!

And now a word about the man himself! He was a wonderful person and a good fellow in the highest sense of this word. There was in him an original power and a fullness of sun and life. At all times he was upright and honest, frank and free; there was nothing contrived and nothing small about him. But—and this was his most attractive and deepest trait—in this powerful naturalness of his, there breathed a quiet, noble, pure soul. As it was his way as a scholar to meet every living being with an open and tender sensitivity, so the core of his being was a tender feeling and a chaste loving-kindness. . . .

The whole man—he believed in the meaning of life and history and in the meaning of his own life: this is the practical test of faith in God. Moreover, he believed that the majesty and humility which shines forth from the cross of Christ is the example and power of our life: this is the practical test of the Christian faith.

Dear, valued friend, we shall not see you again nor hear your voice again. Oh, how bitter this is and how difficult it is to overcome the feelings of nature! "The flower fadeth, for the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it." But the God to whom you have gone is not the God of the dead but of the living, and his dead live with him. "The word of our God standeth for ever." May he teach us to feel his hand also in want and death, in sorrow and hunger. . . And may he strengthen us all so that we may learn to look up and to accustom ourselves to the eternal.

Each day tells the next  
That life is a pilgrimage  
To vast eternity.  
O wondrous eternity,  
Accustom my heart to thee.  
My salvation is not of this time or world.

# For Wilhelm Pauck: A Thanksgiving

Ursula M. Niebuhr

*Humour is a prelude to faith; and laughter is the beginning of prayer.*

—Reinhold Niebuhr

.....

We come together to give thanks for the life of Wilhelm Pauck.

Let us therefore thank the Lord for his love of life and the gift of friendship which he bestowed on so many.

*We thank you, O Lord.*

For his largeness of mind, for the carefulness of his scholarship, for his imagination and understanding in the analysis and interpretation of past writers in the history of faith.

*We thank you, O Lord.*

For the skill and the enchantment of his teaching; for his wit, and also for his patience with those he taught.

*We thank you, O Lord.*

For his special gifts of friendship; for his sympathy with and intuition of the needs of others.

*We thank you, O Lord.*

For the integrity of his witness as scholar, teacher, and friend.

*We thank you, O Lord.*

.....

Now at this time of mourning the loss of his presence, we ask that grace may be given so that we may follow his good example:

Grant, O Lord, that all who teach may, like him, be true to their calling, and may, with all who learn, rejoice in the marvels of your creation and in the treasures of history, art, and human imagination, so that together we may delight in our own several and common disciplines.

Instruct us, O Lord, in your wisdom, guide us by your Spirit, and inspire us by the cloud of witnesses which compass us about: artists and poets, scholars and scientists from every age, so that we may be faithful to the example set before us, and, like him, be diligent in our labors and joyful in our service. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## In Memory of Wilhelm Pauck: Teacher

Jaroslav Pelikan

"In this hour thousands of young theologians are looking back with me at their great teacher." With these words the young Dietrich Bonhoeffer, little knowing what the next decade and a half would bring, began his memorial address for Adolf von Harnack on June 15, 1930.

Wilhelm Pauck was among those thousands of young theologians, students of Harnack, in 1930, although he was already here in the United States by then. And now, just over a half-century later, I have the high honor and mournful responsibility of speaking, on behalf of another two generations, of the "thousands of young theologians" who in this hour are looking back with me at their great teacher.

It is of this that I must speak today, of Wilhelm Pauck as our teacher. When I wrote the introduction to the Festschrift that I had the privilege of editing in his honor, it was important not to make it sound like a eulogy, for he was still very much alive in both body and mind. Now, in turn, it is important not to make this eulogy sound like a nomination for membership in yet another academy of scholars. He would, I am sure, have something appropriate to say if I were to fall into that trap!

Rather let me express, as simply and sincerely as I can, the gratitude that all of us sense for Pauck the *magister*. Having gone our many separate ways after leaving his lecture hall, separate both professionally and theologically, we have learned to understand with the passing years what he meant to us as our teacher—and what it cost him to be our teacher. As we have striven to be teachers, we have experienced just how demanding students can be, downright tyrannical sometimes, and we have developed various mechanisms for relating their demands to the demands of our own scholarship, of our families, and of our academic and public citizenship. Only in this way do we begin to discern how much he invested in his teaching, putting many of us to shame with his outgoing generosity. Speaking for myself, I am often in the library when I know he would have been in the office, and with the door open; and I am obliged to acknowledge that I can do what I do in the library because he spent so much time (and for his own research and publication, I am tempted to say "too much time") with the likes of me. Let me mention, ever so briefly, three models of "the teacher" from the history of Christian thought that come to mind today.



Augustine, in the *De magistro*, saw it as the function of the teacher to stir up within the pupil the "inner word" that was already there, and he equated that "inner word" with Christ. Wilhelm Pauck taught us to see just how Neo-Platonic an image of the teacher that was, redolent with notions of "recollection." Perhaps it shows that "Neo-Platonic" is less a pejorative in my vocabulary than it was in his, but I find Augustine's definition of the teacher's function fulfilled in what I received from Wilhelm Pauck. My own "inner word," my own ties to the Orthodox and Catholic tradition, emerged from his teaching both chastened and strengthened; and because of his overwhelming respect for the integrity of each student, he accepted this even though he did not agree.

It was a variation on the Socratic-Platonic picture of the teacher that informed Kierkegaard's definition of the "maieutic" task. I shall always remember Pauck on Kierkegaard. After one particularly stuffy session of a discussion group to which we belonged, he closed the evening with a reading of SK on "the lilies of the field" and put to silence the chattering of the theologians. He would often invoke the Kierkegaardian metaphor of the midwife to identify his own view of what he was doing as a teacher. He was there to make us honest, to force us to see the presuppositions and the implications of our ideas, and to remind us that we were not the first to burst upon the silent sea. Having done that, he let the newborn scholar grow.

But perhaps the aptest image of the teacher was that of the Reformers. Luther justified his reformatory work on the basis of his being a "doctor in Biblia," and Calvin assigned to the "doctor" a distinct order in the church. Both Luther and Calvin (and Pauck delighted in pointing out their deep affinities, especially to orthodox Lutherans and Calvinists!) could be as assertive as they were in their teaching because they pointed beyond themselves to One whose servants they were, whose Word they were teaching. And although Wilhelm Pauck was less confident than they about the precise locus and the detailed interpretation of the Word of God, there is perhaps no better phrase to describe his contribution to us and to the thousands who pay him honor than the self-description of the Reformers: *ministerium verbi divini*.

In one of his rather rare moments of speaking about his own inner life, at the occasion of the presentation of our Festschrift in Nashville, Professor Pauck told us that ever since childhood he had wanted to be a teacher and that in the children's games of home and neighborhood he was always the teacher. I can easily believe that, for he was always the teacher—and to me, to all of us, he always will be.

*Requiescat in pace et lux perpetua luceat ei!*

## In Memory of Wilhelm Pauck: Spiritual Advisor

Charles M. Nielsen

I'd like to say something about Wilhelm Pauck as a spiritual counselor. This may seem a rather strange topic because he went to great lengths not to appear pious, and *that* is an understatement. He could even say that the altar was the last place he expected to encounter the divine—this to get a rise out of some people. Yet one could say a lot about this topic if one had the time.

Union, of course, was a marvelous place even before Dr. Pauck arrived. It was just full of sparkling personalities; otherwise he would not have come. The Seminary was at its peak of self-confidence and simply assumed that anybody really good would end up here. That was often the case; it was certainly so in *this* case!

When I think of those days, I get nostalgic. I can't help it. I'm a church historian and get paid to live in the past. And these days anyone who does not choose to live in the past is obviously ill! I remember bright stars in the skies, lighted Christmas trees, music, fireworks, laughter, excitement, pictures and articles in *Time* and *Life*, and a student body and faculty still capable of saying "Ah!" I also remember cake and rivers of white wine.

Now any new professor who arrived in 1953 would have had to be an astonishingly competent and interesting person even to be noticed. No problem for Dr. Pauck. He increased the excitement and all those other good things *enormously*. We soon learned that he was a truly great teacher. The classroom was his natural habitat, and this gave him his opening as a spiritual counselor for students. While his lectures were always based on the best recent scholarship (including his own), he always made the subject wonderfully alive in a personal way. It was not only Martin Luther who went through a "breakthrough" in Church History 108. I did too. I had hair then, and it stood straight up.

We knew at once we could talk to Dr. Pauck. He loved to discuss, and he egged us on to do likewise. There is, after all, no point in being a counselor if nobody wants to speak to you. But he could inspire confidence and talk to us in our own language. He not only knew English well, but he even mastered that strange dialect called American, which is something else again. He once told me that this mastering of "American" started during his graduate days at the University of Chicago when a Lutheran student from this country announced, "O.K., Schnickelfritz, we

are going to make an American out of you." And he took Pauck to a baseball game!

It worked. Once to a class here at Union Dr. Pauck said, "Charlie and I are going to give you an examination next week. We will start with objective questions and end up with an essay question so you can all engage in blah-blah." At this point a student said, "Dr. Pauck, I'm a foreigner [not quite; he was from Canada], and I don't know the meaning of 'blah-blah.'" The answer came, "It's spelled yackety-yak."

You will note, I hope, that Wilhelm Pauck knew all about the healing power of humor, so the halls, refectory and classrooms often shook with laughter. Nor was he above a practical joke. I can remember being completely astonished to see the great man himself on his knees in front of my daughter Fay, who was just learning to speak. He thought it would be a marvelous joke and oodles of fun (he liked the word "oodles") to train her to go up to dear Professor Richardson (whom I also love and miss more than I can say) and say, "Hi ya, Cyril!" It didn't stop there. The next lesson was to go up to President Van Dusen and say, "Hi ya, Pitney!" Dr. Pauck had great fun doing this, but I didn't have tenure and am more amused now than I was then.

As for us students, Dr. Pauck knew just how to kid the worrywarts of this world right out of their neurotic guilt, unhealthy introspection and failure of nerve. "Yes," he would say, with a twinkle in his eye, "you are certainly right. The world will end tomorrow, and it's all your fault." Then we would gain perspective, see how stupid we were, and everybody would laugh. When Martin Luther was in the monastery, he had a father confessor to talk him out of his scruples by means of good theology, common sense and a liberal dose of humor. We had Wilhelm Pauck.

One can only be amazed at the number of people who came to Papa Pauck for advice. He was terribly generous, and I don't see how he had time for anything else. Once Paul Lehmann and I appeared at the same time to talk about new jobs. We alternated at fifteen minute intervals and in the meantime were royally entertained by Olga Pauck.

For all his humor and caring, Wilhelm Pauck never lost his dignity, integrity, or high standards, and he was always a gentleman. Moreover, he beautifully exemplified Union's guiding principle about comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable. He would discuss any issue in a tough-minded, honest, open and high-level way. He was never pompous, and he saw to it that the rest of us were not either.

After all, another mark of a Christian spiritual counselor is the ability to know when a person needs to be smashed in his or her own self-righteousness, to be humbled enough to be open to some grace. At a certain Th.D. oral exam that I remember rather well, Dr. Pauck said, "Your thesis lacks scope [he was right!]. A *whole* thesis on Clement of Rome is like going down to the vast beach which is the Church and picking up one little stone, polishing it and shining it until it fairly takes wings." "Do you mean my thesis is for the birds?" the candidate asked, needing grace at this point. He got it. Pauck laughed.

When the students informed him of a certain colleague's statements about God, Pauck said to everyone's great delight, "So and so is a Modalistic Monarchian." You can't imagine the thrill of excitement which ran through the Seminary at the thought of having a real, live Modalistic Monarchian on campus. Not since the fourth century when the Cappadocians had been filled with horror at the thought of this theology had the term received so much attention. (For those of you who don't know, a Modalistic Monarchian is a Sabellian or a Patripassian. I hope that helps!)

Well, the advice and counseling continued to be given long after we left Union. I don't know quite how I'm going to get along without it or him, but I've been well taught not to dwell on the loss; that only makes me cry. Instead, I'll try to express my enormous gratitude for a wonderful gift freely given and so keep the memory alive. I hope you will do the same.



## In Memory of Wilhelm Pauck: Colleague and Friend

Paul L. Lehmann

Wilhelm Pauck and I first met on an afternoon in early October in the Francis Brown Social Hall here at Union. The year was 1930. He had come to give a lecture, and thus to get a new academic year properly under way.

The word was around that a bright young German theological scholar had been appointed as an instructor in the history of Christian thought, with special attention to the Reformation, at the Chicago Theological Seminary. This appointment bore the aura of particular promise because five years earlier (1925), Wilhelm had been the German Resident Fellow at CTS, and was already on the way to a full professorship in church history, which came to him in 1931. His informed and lively mind, infectious humor, and gifted powers of analytical and imaginative interpretation of Christian doctrine in seminars and in informal conversations with faculty and students, had so stirred them with the excitement of theology that he was invited—before returning to Germany—to return to Chicago as a member of the faculty.

One wondered, as one listened, by what alchemy of spirit did a German speak such flawless English, devoid of Oxonian tonalities and mid-western indifference to vowels and consonants. One wondered also what this Lutheran was doing in that bastion of middle-western Congregationalism. The secret was divulged that afternoon in the Social Hall. It was plain as day that Wilhelm was indeed “an Israelite in whom there is no guile!” (John 1:47) No arrogant young intellectual on the make was he! Nor was he a condescending emissary of a culture and tradition designed to offset the innocence and ignorance of human existence between the Alleghenies and the Rockies! On the contrary! We beheld that afternoon an academic person in whom *Sachlichkeit* (a sober sense of the reality of things) had completely exiled *Selbstbewusstsein* (self-consciousness) from scholarship, learning and teaching; in whom seriousness was humanized by humor and humor harbored against trivialization by seriousness; for whom the momentous and the anecdotal belonged together in making the past come alive in the present; and in whom the heart was captive to a liberating commitment and was never, could never be worn on the sleeve, because the private was designed as the secret place of the mystery of the image of God and, thus, as the strength and stay of those bound together with him in kinship, friendship, and collegiality.

It follows from this privacy that Wilhelm would be highly bemused by the goings on which have brought us all here together in this chapel, on this day of remembrance and recollection. "I tell ya' now," I can hear him exclaiming, "all this pomp and circumstance is not for me!" Not that he would be indifferent to or ungrateful for the gifts of friendship and gratitude and affection which insist from the depth of our hearts upon surrounding him upon every memorable occasion of his life, including the remembrance of his reception into the Church Triumphant. A grain of Westphalian soil, which specializes in the nurture of diffidence, together with two grains of Lutheran unease about ceremonies insufficiently vulnerable to vanity, and a large measure of Romanticist depth and delicacy about the private mystery of being a person, would find him strongly preferring conviviality and conversation in celebration of the goodliness of the human spirit, and preferring silence and solitude in thankfulness for the companionship and leading of the Holy Spirit in suffering and death.

As I think of Wilhelm as a colleague, I think especially of his integrity, of his commitment to excellence, and of his self-discipline. As abstractions, these words belong, as we know, to the language and reflections of moral philosophy; and each of us here has his or her own ways of giving concrete referentiality to them. But as ways of being and working together with Wilhelm, these words denote a memorable experience for which one is moved to respect, admiration, and gratitude. *Integrity* is a way of being *whole* or *entire* in what one does. His commitment to *excellence* also was not abstract but concrete. His world was radically antithetical to the world of not a few round about him, a world described by Antonio Salieri in Peter Schaffer's play, *Amadeus*. Referring to his parents, Salieri declares: "[They] were provincial subjects of the Austrian Empire. A Lombardy merchant and his Lombardy wife. . . . Their notion of God was a superior Habsburg Emperor, inhabiting a heaven only slightly farther off than Vienna. All they required of Him was to protect commerce, and keep them forever preserved in mediocrity."<sup>1</sup> *Mediocrity*: the studied and stubborn preference for a world that conforms to one's image of security, prestige and power, as the surest way of destroying a world that continually claims one. Wilhelm had looked early and late, and he "saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness" (Eccl. 2:13). And he knew and accepted for himself the discipline of the freedom which excellence brings to all who, through excellence, discover the integrity which makes them immune to the vanity of self-consciousness, ambition, and pretense.

At the level of his vocation, his self-discipline involved the quiet and

steady mastery of what simply had to be known and understood. At the level of his personal feelings and fears, desires and needs, disappointments and hopes, this self-discipline involved the quiet self-control which steadily seeks not his own but his neighbor's good. Ever and again in faculty or committee discussions, I found myself both awed by and impatient of Wilhelm's extraordinary tolerance level of the trivial, the irrelevant, the vocalized espousals of mediocrity. If only Pauck would *say* something! Only then, and again and again, did I come to the realization that he was choosing his moment to say what he thought: with clarity, humor, grace, and to the point. And then—the *right* word would be said! And one did not even have to concur in his judgment, in acknowledging that the *right* word had been said!

It belongs to the mystery of selfhood that who Wilhelm was as a colleague should be congruent with Wilhelm as a friend. Our friendship spanned half a century. And as I think of him today, in recollection and remembrance, I think especially of his loyalty, his steadfastness, and his freedom. The experience of his loyalty was the experience of his unmistakable being with one, even when one knew that he wished with all his heart, that in this, that, or the other respect, one had been or had done otherwise. The experience of his steadfastness was the experience of a dependability in standing by, when one was in need of a right judgment, a clarifying perspective, a humorous reminder of human frailty, and the sustaining assurance that he was there, and on hand, and ready for more. The experience of his freedom was the experience of making so clear what he thought or would do, as to point the way ahead as a way of openness and adventure, of fulfillment and worthy of trust, for all of which one can only be more grateful than words can express.

In losing Wilhelm's nearer presence and comradeship, I have, in John Leonard's moving phrase, "lost a friend my private world can least afford."<sup>2</sup>

"Always to rigorous  
judgment and censure  
freely assenting,  
we seek in our humanity  
not orders, not laws and peremptory dogmas,  
but counsel from one who is earnest in goodness  
and faithful in friendship,  
making us free."<sup>3</sup>

## Notes

1. Peter Schaffer, *Amadeus* (New York: Harper & Row Colophon Books, 1981), p. 7.
2. John Leonard, "On Losing a Friend My Private World Can Least Afford," in *The New York Times*, Wednesday, 2 March 1977.
3. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "The Friend," in *Letters and Papers From Prison*, rev. ed. by Eberhard Bethge (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968), p. 211; adapted.



3.

IN MEMORY OF WILHELM PAUCK

Remarks by Dale A. Johnson  
The Divinity School, Vanderbilt University  
Benton Chapel  
11 September 1981

With selections from *The Heritage of the Reformation*  
by Wilhelm Pauck



credit: Blackstone Studios

Wilhelm Pauck, 1953-1954 (his first year at UTS)

Last week, as we opened a new school year in this chapel, word was received that Wilhelm Pauck had died in the night of September 3. He had been Distinguished Professor of Church History in the Divinity School from 1967 to 1972. He is part of our heritage, and we fondly remember him today.

Born in Germany and a student at the universities of Berlin and Göttingen, Wilhelm Pauck came to this country for a one-year period of study at Chicago Theological Seminary in 1925. Following the death of the church historian there at the end of that year, he was offered an appointment in church history and began a career of teaching that was to span fifty years. He taught at CTS and the University of Chicago until 1953, when he joined the faculty of Union Theological Seminary, New York. Upon retiring from Union in 1967 he came to Vanderbilt for five years, and then took up residence in Palo Alto, California, where he continued to teach at Stanford University.

Pauck's interests in the field of church history were very broad, extending from the early church to contemporary theology. That breadth was symbolized in his service as president of both the American Society of Church History and the American Theological Society. He was particularly noted for his work in the history of Protestant theology, and within that field for his contributions to Reformation and Luther studies. His writings include editions of Luther's *Lectures on Romans* and of treatises by Melancthon and Bucer (in the Library of Christian Classics), *Harnack and Troeltsch*, and the volume of essays titled *The Heritage of the Reformation*. His most recent book, done in collaboration with his wife, Marion Hausner Pauck, is a study of Paul Tillich's life and thought; the second volume of this work was being written at the time of his death. A stimulating teacher and lecturer, he passed on to several generations of students and ministers a passion for understanding the nature of Christian faith and its implications for human life, doing so with a spirit and wit that made deep impressions on those who studied and worked with him.

One searches for ways to illustrate "the real Pauck:" the teacher who told such delightful stories, who disliked the ponderous and deflated the pompous, who punctuated a lecture with a finger stabbing the air or emphasized a point with a slap on the knee. It is difficult. He who could lecture so cogently about Aquinas's understanding of God was not above telling at the same time what was done with Aquinas's mortal remains.

He who so eloquently declaimed on salvation by faith alone, and who demanded that our understanding of this teaching be shaped by the canons of modern historical criticism, was once depicted in a student skit as standing with one foot in the sixteenth century and the other on a banana peel!

Besides his specific contributions to Reformation research, Wilhelm Pauck also mediated to the American scene strands of two modern European theological perspectives: the tradition of nineteenth-century Protestant Liberalism and the developing critique of that tradition by Protestant neo-orthodoxy (or the "new evangelicalism," as Pauck preferred to call it). He was heir to both perspectives, yet he had sharp criticisms of each. The leading features of his own position are well indicated by the following passages from chapters 10 and 11 of his *Heritage of the Reformation* (rev. ed., 1961):

"The Christian religion stands and falls with the conviction that God has revealed himself to men in the historical person of Jesus of Nazareth. This means that God has made his character known in Jesus although he is not confined in him. Even though he has disclosed himself in the historical Jesus, he still remains God in his unapproachable mystery. In ever new ways, the theologians have attempted to state these implications of the idea of God's revelation in Jesus. That is why the theories, the doctrines, of revelation have constantly changed.

While recognizing its indebtedness to ancient and medieval thinkers, Protestantism has paid special attention to the dynamic character of this idea of revelation. On the one hand, it has stressed the divine transcendence in all theological, liturgical, and ethical thoughts of the presence of God in Jesus, and, on the other hand, it has given full freedom to the historical investigation of the figure of the man from Nazareth. It has not always avoided the danger of dissolving the tension that is involved in the belief that God has made himself known in a historical person (Protestant theologians have been inclined to minimize or to exaggerate the importance of the historicity of Jesus), but it has nevertheless injected the dynamic vitality of the Christian belief in revelation into all phases of its life."

[P. 185]



"Throughout the history of Protestantism, many interpreters have insisted that the character of Protestantism can be properly understood only by reference to the forms which it developed in Lutheran, Calvinist, and even Anglican types. But there is no classical expression of Protestantism which could serve as a pattern for all its forms. Protestant Christianity must, rather, be understood as a movement which is determined by a twofold motivating power: the faith in the Father of Jesus Christ as the only sovereign God, and the ethos of love emanating therefrom. This movement has never been enclosed in a definite, final form. No ecclesiastical organization and no theological system can claim to represent or express it fully. Neither Luther's Biblicism and its doctrinal implications nor Calvin's Biblicism and its ecclesiastical extensions could, even in the sixteenth century, hold in definite channels the impetus derived from the direct encounter with the revelation-faith of the early Christians. The many so-called denominational forms of liturgy, theology, church order, and ethics which Protestantism produced from the beginning of its history were the inevitable expressions of its spirit. The claim which all Protestant groups at some time in their history advanced, that their forms of faith and order, life, and work were the final ones, has always been refuted by the diversified vitality of Protestant religiousness. We may say, therefore, that there is no form of Protestantism that constitutes its ideal type. Protestantism is a spiritual attitude, grounded in the living faith that God has made himself known in the person of Jesus of Nazareth and expressing itself ever anew in ways of life and thinking which reflect this faith as a proclamation of the glory of God transcending all human limitations and sufficiencies. The Protestant spirit is a spirit of prophetic criticism. Its norm is the gospel of the God of love who liveth in a light no man can approach unto and yet is nearer to us than breathing, closer than hands or feet; the same who disclosed himself in Jesus who was born in a manger, had no place to lay his head, and died on a cross.

No form can adequately express this content of the faith in revelation. No liturgical or ecclesiastical or theological form of this idea of revelation can be final." [Pp. 194-95]

"This form [of the Christian faith in revelation which would make it truly contemporaneous] will never be found if the Protestant movement should continue to be dominated by the tendencies toward religious individualism and toward an extra-ecclesiastical religiousness which now seem to determine its life. It will only be found if the two most promising trends in contemporary Protestantism win the loyal interest of an increasing number of devoted Christian people, namely, the Christian social realism and the ecumenical movement. The future of Protestantism may therefore depend upon the work of those who try to discover a form for the Christian faith by applying it to the social-political problems of modern life, not failing, if necessary, to state the irreconcilability of the Christian ethos with the spirit which dominates the social, political, and cultural life of the present day. The church groups which may come into being under the effect of such endeavors will possibly demonstrate that, in the future that lies ahead, Christianity is again to be the concern of a minority.

But these new groups of a contemporaneous Christianity which proclaim the prophetic power of God's revelation in Jesus by releasing it in the midst of the crisis of modern civilization must cooperate with those who give themselves to the labor of accomplishing a united Christian movement, recognizing that the historical denominational churches have completed the work which their fathers assigned to them. The social realism of radical Protestantism and the ecumenical movement may, therefore, possibly be the means by which Protestantism will continue to break the old forms and make new forms, so that the history of the coming days will feel the impact of that revelation which, in the fate of Jesus, disclosed God's ways of judging and redeeming human history." [Pp. 198-99]

.....

"The nature of Protestantism, we conclude, is a spiritual dynamism which can never rest with anything that has been attained. If the Protestant churches, the products of the Protestant spirit in the life particularly of the Western nations of modern times, should choose to be loyal to their faith by preserving and perpetuating merely their historical inheritance, they would deny their lord. Responding to the sovereign, free, unbound Word of God, the living Christ, they must act in the present world without an absolute regard for their own past. For what Protestantism has been historically, is not necessarily of the essence of the Christian faith as Protestants understand it. 'Whosoever putteth his hand to the plow and looketh back is not fit for the Kingdom of God.' " [P. 210]

## 4.

## THE STATE AND FUTURE OF HISTORICAL THEOLOGY:

## In Honor of Wilhelm Pauck's Eightieth Birthday

[Wilhelm Pauck observed his eightieth birthday on 31 January 1981. The American Society of Church History, of which Dr. Pauck was a past president, marked this occasion with a special session in his honor at its annual meeting in Washington, D.C., 29 December 1980. The session addressed itself to a topic which formed one of Wilhelm Pauck's focal concerns as a scholar and teacher: "The State and Future of Historical Theology." Presentations were made by four panelists, each of whom studied under Dr. Pauck at Union Theological Seminary-Columbia University in the 1950s and 1960s: Elizabeth A. Clark, H. Jackson Forstman, B. A. Gerrish, and David W. Lotz. The session was chaired by another of Dr. Pauck's former Union students, Dale A. Johnson.]



At the wedding of Marion and Wilhelm Pauck, New York City, 21 November 1964, with, left, Reinhold Niebuhr (best man) and, center, Paul Tillich (officiating minister)



## On the State and Future of Historical Theology

Jack Forstman

We are here to consider the state and future of historical theology as an act in honor of Wilhelm Pauck. We could, if we wished, use the term "Church History" for "historical theology." If Wilhelm Pauck uses the term "historical theologian" in reference to himself, he does so rarely. So far as I recall he has spoken of his discipline consistently as "Church History." Even so, it is best that we stay with the term that was announced because it is more precisely descriptive of the mode and function of Church History in which Wilhelm Pauck engaged. Furthermore, "historical theology" more appropriately describes the task and the goal of historical study when Christianity is its object.

In addition to Church History, we have used a number of different terms to designate our work: the History of Christianity, the History of Dogma, the History of Christian Doctrine, the History of Christian Thought, the History of Christian Theology. Of these, Church History and the History of Christianity are the most encompassing, and any one of them probably serves better than "historical theology" to point to a discipline, that is, an object of study with artifacts, a body of literature and a method of study. To think of ourselves as historical theologians, however, may be the most helpful way to reflect about our work because it makes clear to us that the work we do is itself theology. At its best, it *must* be theology. Now and then, here and there, we forget or overlook or even deny this purpose of our work. So I put it strongly out of necessity.

The object of our study is Christianity, a movement that had its beginning and that developed through many ages and in diverse cultures. One is, of course, overwhelmed by the task, corporate though it is, of recovering as responsibly and accurately as possible, the history of the phenomenon. Whether one focuses for one's own work upon a larger or smaller part of it, there is always more to discover and learn. But however valuable discovery and learning and, especially, the communication of what has been discovered and learned are, one wants one's learning to count for more than a recitation of the past. One wants to move from learning to *understanding*, and if one does not make that movement oneself, then one knows that one's work is incomplete and awaits another who will take it up and make something of it that contributes to the comprehension of the phenomenon Christianity.

The impulse to comprehend in the case of Christianity, as in the case of any powerful movement in history, extends beyond the weighing of forces and counter-forces at this or that moment to the effort to grasp that which makes it what it is, that is, the faith that gives the movement life and duration. The historical study of Christianity, therefore, does not fulfill its goal until the historian, in the course of inquiry, has also struggled with the question, "What is Christian faith and what are its implications for human life?" That question, however, is the most basic question of the theologian. In this sense, then, the discipline of the History of Christianity or Church History is historical *theology*.

It is, however, *historical* theology, and that modifier distinguishes it from systematic, dogmatic, philosophical and biblical theology, though it deals with systems, dogmas, philosophical thought and biblical materials. The modifier points not only to the obvious fact that the materials with which the historian deals come from the past. More fundamentally, it refers to the historical method or the historical sense. Although the historical sense is hardly in its infancy, only rarely has it been exercised radically. It is, however, a sense that claims everything it touches, with no exceptions, and because it has become a part of us all, in one measure or another, it is right for us regularly to reflect on its constituent parts and to explore their implications.

The historical sense as such is a development of the modern consciousness. It begins with an awareness of change and difference. One culture is different from others, one language from others. Cultures and languages change over the course of time. Authors, artists, leaders have different ways of expressing themselves. It is, of course, a simple point, but the appropriation of this awareness has helped to account for remarkable achievements in the understanding of the past.

This awareness of change and difference leads one to investigate both what it is that makes a culture or movement distinctive and how it has changed, experiencing both continuity and discontinuity. One tries to grasp individuality, sorting out the elements that are common to other individuals and those that are different and new, as well as looking for new concatenations that themselves give new impulses and meanings. One comes to understand the interrelatedness of acts, ideas and modes of thought, leading to the discovery of causalities that help one to see the forces that bring forth this or that phenomenon and to distinguish similarities and differences, family resemblances and continuities, and the founding of new families with the possibility of new continuities.

One learns to be distrustful. Not everything that represents itself as similar, continuous, a member of the family is such, and not everything that represents itself as different, discontinuous, the establishment of a new clan is such. One learns to doubt, to insist upon being shown so that one can show others. There was a time when doubting was a major sin. In modern times it has not only become a major virtue; it has become so much a part of us that even children become adept at the sceptical analysis of TV commercials. The triumph of doubt, with its insistence upon posing questions and upon being shown rather than told, has done as much as anything to open the gates to the past, to recapture and understand it.

With the awareness of change and difference, and the vast extension of our knowledge to which this has led, has come also a remarkable extension of the range of the human imagination. One sees the possibility of participating in that which is different from oneself. Just as one can put oneself in the place of another individual whom one comes to know, and thus understand why he or she acts, thinks, speaks or writes in one way rather than another, so one can, the more one comes to know a moment of the past, put oneself in that different moment and understand it better.

The effect of the historical sense upon the understanding of the present cannot be overlooked. If movements, events, ideas, persons in the past are related to other forces (that is, relative), if they are limited by factors of time and place, then so also are the movements, events, ideas and persons of the present. The historian, perhaps above all others, ought to be possessed of a self-understanding characterized by a sense of relativity and limitation and, beyond that, of the relativity and limitation of all things human.

Here we encounter the basic assumption of modern historical work, the assumption that is operative in all the useful and illuminating historical work of the last two-hundred years, even though it has not always been articulated and has not always been adhered to consistently. I refer to the human character of history. Not only is it the case that the historian has access only to what is human; it is also the case that the historian must assume that everything from the past that submits itself to historical study is human, and therefore limited and relative. When one makes Christianity, the church, Christian faith the object of historical study, then one must assume that the phenomenon of Christianity, the development of the churches and the expressions of Christian faith are limited and relative.

The historian cannot deal with God, but only with human attempts to express a faith in God and to act upon it. To the extent that the historian is consistent, he or she cannot assume that any object of study possesses a divine authority, whether it be a tradition or a text or a set of texts. An historical account of Christian faith governed, explicitly or implicitly, by a premise of revealed authority is a contradiction in terms. I think this statement is implied by the historical sense.

Have we here, however, met up with another contradiction? Is it possible, given these implications of the historical sense, to be an historical theologian? To the extent that to be a theologian is to deal with the question of the truth of Christian faith, there is a contradiction between the two terms, and the historian as historian cannot participate in that enterprise. However, as I have noted, the more basic question of any theologian is, "What is Christian faith and what are its implications for human life?" One way, and perhaps the best way, to get at this question is by dealing with the question, "What was Christian faith in its origins and what has it been through its history?" This question is the route by which the historian gets at the most basic question of theology, becomes a theologian, and thereby brings his or her work closer to its fulfillment. Whatever other questions theologians may pose can be illuminated by the answers to this most basic question given by historians, and in some cases theologians do well to consider themselves challenged and claimed by the answers of the historians.

For the most part, historical theologians, like other kinds of theologians, work at this most basic question in bits and pieces. They circumscribe their projects by limiting them to a stated period of time, a person, a movement, a theme, or what have you. These enterprises, like limited projects in other forms of theology, can also contribute to the most basic question, and it is in becoming theology that they, too, move toward their fulfillment. At their best they contribute to the present-tense form of the question as well as to its past-tense form.

I wish also, however, to say a word in support of that enterprise in historical theology that corresponds to full-blown works in other forms of theology. I mean, of course, the effort to answer the most basic question of theology by dealing with the full compass of Christian faith from its beginnings to the present, or at least with enough of it so that one has confidence in a thesis in answer to the question that is suggested by the study, and that can be defended by the material itself as illuminated by the historical sense.



In appropriating the historical sense the historian has appropriated the modern consciousness that operates to one degree or another in all human beings touched in any way by the currents of our life—a consciousness whose thrust it is to dominate everything. In the scientific analysis of change and difference, of continuities and discontinuities, of forces both innate and alien, and by means of the historical imagination, one begins to find grounds for the choices that must be made in dealing with the origins and development of Christian faith. On the basis of the choices one makes, and tries to support, one can begin to talk about the inevitable distortions and partial recoveries humans inevitably introduce, and one can deal freshly with degrees of distortion and thus with the points at which distortion becomes destruction. In this way the historical study of Christian faith contributes most fully to the most basic question of theology and itself becomes historical theology. It is a difficult work in which one is likely to slip and fall repeatedly. That is, after all, the nature of a human work. However, because we work in the public forum on the basis of assumptions that are universally accessible, it is a work in which others can correct us and we can correct each other—no guarantee of progress, to be sure, but frequently a good way to avoid something worse!

In these reflections I have tried to represent in some measure the contributions and the thrust in the work of Wilhelm Pauck. We know that he is indebted to the Reformers, especially to Luther, but we know also that he realizes that Luther worked with two assumptions that make his thinking difficult to transpose into the contemporary world: Luther never doubted that there is a God or that this God spoke in the Bible. Neither conviction, Pauck repeatedly stated, can any longer be taken for granted. Even so, the major question of the Reformers has been his question as well: What is the Christian gospel?

We know also that Pauck has been influenced by Schleiermacher and by the developments in critical-historical thinking in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially by Harnack, Troeltsch and Holl. He knows that their answers to the basic question must be modified, but he has made it clear that their use of the historical sense, their attempts to free theology from the principle of authority, and their sensitivity to contemporary times must be honored, whatever the difficulties.

A number of years ago he told me about a student skit in Chicago in which he was represented as entering the stage with a volume of Luther on one foot and a banana peel on the other. It is not an inappropriate symbol for the proper work of historical theology.

## The State and Future of Historical Theology: Patristic Studies

Elizabeth A. Clark

What is the present state and probable future of historical theology in the field of patristics? The question can be succinctly answered: less theology, more history. The past two decades have witnessed a shift away from the inclusion of patristics as a sub-field of theology, and all signs point to a continuation of this trend. The shift from a theological to an historical emphasis in patristics can be correlated with two phenomena affecting all present scholarship on Christianity.

First, the former domination of Christian studies by neo-orthodox theology has subsided and that subsidence, I venture, would have pleased the man we honor here, Wilhelm Pauck. Pauck warrants inclusion in the ranks of the minor prophets, for already in 1954, ruing the Barthian dominance of historical scholarship, he looked to the day when the confessional theologies then so popular would be "viewed as impossible because of their neglect of the historical dimensions of the Christian faith."<sup>1</sup> These were his words at the time of his inauguration as professor of church history at Union Theological Seminary. Three years later he voiced the same concern: "What we need is historical understanding, not theosophy. The churches have more need of a Harnack than a Barth."<sup>2</sup> To Harnack's importance for current historical studies I shall return; for now, Pauck's success at prognostication should be heralded.

A second and related phenomenon affecting patristics is its transfer from the seminary to the university. In the university, there is little place for piety to intrude, to claim itself as the *telos* of Christian scholarship. Christian studies may indeed constitute only a fraction of the university religion department's course offerings and in no way are seen as *apologiae* for the faith. In the university setting, it matters not if the results of scholarly investigation are discomfiting to traditional Christian religiosity. Just as in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries New Testament scholarship was wrenched from the service of the church, so now patristic studies have cast off their former ecclesiastical moorings. Thus patristics is no longer a discipline devoted primarily to the investigation of dogmatic developments in and for themselves; rather, it finds its new home amidst studies of the late ancient world, commanding attention as one among many cultural phenomena of late antiquity. Patristic scholars soon realized that they must become more sensitive to the political, social,

economic, religious, and cultural movements of the period. They had to look more carefully at the work of archeologists, classicists, art historians, numismatists, and papyrologists in order to do their own work; in fact, they sometimes needed to become archeologists, numismatists, and so forth, themselves. And the move to the university also made clear that patristics scholars needed to learn much from the social science disciplines as well as from the humanities. As they learned, they put fresh questions to the texts in place of the traditional—and sometimes tired—ones Christian dogmatics had asked for centuries. Their reading and scholarly investigations introduced them to strange new worlds.

A nice illustration of the point is afforded by a glance at the bibliographies and footnotes of Peter Brown's recent works. They indicate in an illuminating manner what an inventive scholar of the early Christian era might be reading today. To be sure, the books on dogma are still there, but what else do we find? First of all, the type of literature commonly read by classicists and ancient historians: *Onomastic Studies in the Early Christian Inscriptions of Roman Carthage*; *Manpower Shortage and the Fate of the Roman Empire in the West*; *Porphyrius the Charioteer*; "The Ceiling Paintings in Trier and Illusionism in Constantinian Painting." But beyond these, we note other works that only a few, if any, earlier patristics scholars would have read for professional edification: *On Shame and the Search for Identity*; *Purity and Danger*; *Spirit Mediumship and Society in Africa*. We are here in a different world, an exciting world—but one for which most scholars of early Christianity received no specific training. Hence they have been thrust again into the role of students: probably the best thing that could happen to *any* scholar!

To locate more precisely the shifts in the world of patristic studies, we might take as a foil that prince of church historians so dear to Wilhelm Pauck, Adolf von Harnack. And a superb foil Harnack provides, for as a liberal historian he was concerned to note the ever-changing quality of Christianity in all its relations with culture.<sup>3</sup> Political, social, economic influences could not be discounted in the formation of Christian dogma, Harnack insisted, over against others of his time. He sharply criticized as "unscientific" the notion that dogma simply "unfolded itself." His view was that dogma had its history "in the individual living man and nowhere else."<sup>4</sup> He called on scholars to take that notion seriously, to look at "the actual conditions in which believing and intelligent men have been placed."<sup>5</sup> Thus, in using Harnack as a foil, we erect no straw man who will topple at the first blow.

A difference immediately evident between the present generation of patristics scholars and Harnack is an ideological one. Despite Harnack's concern for political influences on dogma, Hegelian idealism colored his approach to early Christianity. Thus Harnack, envisioning the *Geist* at work in human history,<sup>6</sup> spoke of the "progressive concretion of the spirit."<sup>7</sup> Although Marxists have not swamped the field of patristics, there is nonetheless today a greater emphasis on the ways in which material processes shaped early Christian theology, much as they shaped other ideologies. Even if scholars may not be entirely comfortable with Marx's and Engels's slogan, "Life is not determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life,"<sup>8</sup> they are perhaps *more* comfortable with it than they are with Harnack's "progressive concretion of the spirit." That relative difference of ease is reflected in the works now considered essential reading for the patristics scholar. Such classics as the works on late ancient economic and social issues by Mikhail Rostovtzeff<sup>9</sup> and A.H.M. Jones,<sup>10</sup> for example, are now supplemented by more technical studies, such as Richard Duncan-Jones's *The Economy of the Roman Empire: Quantitative Studies*<sup>11</sup> and Peter Garnsey's *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire*.<sup>12</sup> Among American scholars, Robert Grant has been influential in relating ancient political, economic, and social history to patristic scholarship, as is especially evidenced by his *Early Christianity and Society: Seven Studies*.<sup>13</sup>

But the change in ideological perspective isn't all. The passing of the decades has given us a wealth of material not available to Harnack. Scholars today, of course, possess critical editions of many patristic texts published since Harnack's time. (Consider, for example, the state of Gregory of Nyssa's writings before the critical work of Werner Jaeger and his colleagues.<sup>14</sup>) The older series of critical editions that were begun in Harnack's era, such as *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* and *Patrologia Orientalis*, have been joined by newer ones: *Corpus Christianorum*, *Sources Chretiennes*, *Oxford Early Christian Texts*, and the new *Corpus Patristicum Hispanum*. And twentieth-century translations have made patristic primary source material available for classroom use.

Likewise, the uncovering of hitherto unknown Gnostic materials, particularly the Manichean and Nag Hammadi documents, would have delighted Harnack, whose interest in Gnosticism remained keen from his graduate-school days to his final work on Marcion.<sup>15</sup> But the famous Harnackian dictum on Gnosticism, that it was "the acute secularizing or hellenizing of Christianity, with the rejection of the Old Testament,"<sup>16</sup>



is now seen to require extensive modification, if not outright rejection, given the hot debates on pre-Christian, extra-Christian, and Jewish Gnosticism.

Without doubt, the discussion of Gnosticism has dominated the past two decades of patristic scholarship. A cursory glance at the titles of articles in the patristics journal *Vigiliae Christianae* during the 1970s gives the impression that more of them were devoted to Gnosticism than to any other single topic of research, and the 1978 International Conference on Gnosticism at Yale demonstrated that the work of previous decades had hardly exhausted the field. A new generation of scholars has arisen to join the ranks of Hans Jonas and Gilles Quispel: for example, Klaus Koschorke,<sup>17</sup> Bentley Layton,<sup>18</sup> Birger Pearson,<sup>19</sup> and PHEME PERKINS.<sup>20</sup> So complex and technical have Gnostic studies become that it was a pleasant surprise to register the immense popular success that awaited Elaine Pagels's *The Gnostic Gospels*.<sup>21</sup> It is clear that both the editing of patristic texts and recent "finds" have given us much new material on which to work.

In addition, the past two decades have seen discussion of topics that have been with us for centuries, but are now being investigated anew. One such topic is heresy. Here the seminal work was Walter Bauer's *Rechtgläubigkeit und Ketzerei im ältesten Christentum*, published in English in 1971 as *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*.<sup>22</sup> The book was provocative in several respects. First of all, there was its sheer unsettling effect upon those who had accepted the church fathers' claim that "orthodoxy" was chronologically prior to "heresy." As Bauer showed, in some early Christian centers such as Edessa, "heresy" was the earliest form of Christianity we know.

Since the publication of Bauer's book, there has been a mushrooming of work on heresy, quite apart from the interest in Gnosticism. Monophysites have received attention from W.H.C. Frend,<sup>23</sup> Jacques Jarry,<sup>24</sup> Roberta Chesnut,<sup>25</sup> and Robin Darling.<sup>26</sup> Priscillian has been studied by Henry Chadwick.<sup>27</sup> Nestorian texts have been edited and commented on by Luise Abramowski and Alan Goodman, among others.<sup>28</sup> Arianism has also proved a fertile field for scholars, with recent contributions by Manlio Simonetti,<sup>29</sup> Thomas Kopecek,<sup>30</sup> Rudolf Lorenz,<sup>31</sup> and Robert Gregg and Dennis Groh.<sup>32</sup> As for the Donatists, they have received ample study in the past three decades: in English, there has been Frend's book, *The Donatist Church*,<sup>33</sup> but there are other important works on the subject by Hans-Joachim Diesner,<sup>34</sup> Jean-Paul Brisson<sup>35</sup> and the excellent study by Emin Tengström.<sup>36</sup>



Bauer's book also served to stimulate another tendency of modern patristic scholarship: to focus on particular geographical centers of Christianity, an enterprise that inevitably brought to light the diversity of early Christian communities. The older chronological and dogmatic approaches had little helped us to understand the variations in Christian belief and practice that might be present from city to city, province to province. One product of the new interest in particular cities was the American Academy of Religion's working group on The Social World of Early Christianity that for several years devoted itself to the study of Antioch. Two members of that group, Wayne Meeks and Robert Wilken, have enriched our knowledge of that city in their *Jews and Christians in Antioch in the First Four Centuries of the Common Era*.<sup>37</sup> As might have been expected, the investigation of particular centers meant that archeological research was of increasing importance to the patristics scholar. We may still have much to learn, for example, about the city of Origen and Eusebius, Caesarea, from the archeological work proceeding there.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, Palestine in general is becoming an area of archeological interest for patristics as well as for Biblical scholars.<sup>39</sup>

Another development, reflected in Bauer's concentration on Edessa, has been a widening recognition that the Greek and Roman boundaries of patristic studies have been too narrow; we have neglected such areas of early Christian development as Syria and Armenia. Arthur Vööbus's work in collecting, editing, and interpreting Syriac texts deserves special mention.<sup>40</sup> And the new generation of Syriac scholars, including Roberta Chesnut,<sup>41</sup> Robert Murray,<sup>42</sup> Sebastian Brock,<sup>43</sup> Micheline Albert,<sup>44</sup> and Sidney Griffith,<sup>45</sup> among others, ensures that the field will continue to flourish. Entire conferences are now devoted to topics such as "East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period."<sup>46</sup> Such emphases remind those trained only in Greek and Latin that the early Christian world encompassed the Orontes as well as the Tiber.

Lastly, there has been of late an interest in topics and approaches that some would claim are stimulated by recent political and social concerns, especially as those have been manifested in America. Women's studies is a case in point. To be sure, there have been in decades past studies pertaining to women in the early Christian era. The difference between past and present lies in the current widespread interest in the subject, and in the desire to move the subject from the periphery to a more central place in the scholarship on the early Christian era. The Gnostic material has excited much interest in this respect,<sup>47</sup> and our understanding of the Gnostic sects may be modified as we learn more about their theologies and practices in relation to women. The "orthodox" women are emerging in their own right as well, with attention now direct-

ed to Macrina, Olympias, the Melanias, Jerome's circle, and so on.<sup>48</sup> Investigations of the social world of early Christianity will undoubtedly take more account in the future of these women, the realizations of any ecclesiastical fundraiser's dream.

Also perhaps sparked by social events of our time is the changed approach to the study of the Fathers: there is a noticeable tendency toward "debunking." In recent discussions of heresy, for example, we find a manifest sympathy with the supposed heretics and a suspicion of the orthodox Fathers. Far from receiving special favor, the latter have been called high-handed, if not outrightly criminal, in their discouragement (indeed obliteration) of their opponents. This tendency was noted by Patrick Henry in a paper delivered at the 1979 Oxford Patristics Conference. Henry wrote,

We tend to see everything in terms of power struggles, manipulations, negotiations, lobbyings, trade-offs, compromises, revolutions . . . . And recent experience, at least in the United States, has given us a very jaundiced view of those who come out on top in political contests. We instinctively assume that those who have risen to the top have done so by hook, crook, chicanery, deception (or for sure, 'trimming'), corruption. . . . And in the early Church, the Fathers are, for the most part, those who come out on top. Given our assumptions their very identity as Fathers puts them on trial. <sup>49</sup>

Although the heavy concentration of recent scholarship on the heretics has been criticized, I would argue that we do not appreciate the richness of the patristic era unless we give equal voice to those who lost out in the evolution of mainstream Christianity, and unless we note with some care the methods by which those now called saints of the church won the day. Although we may feel sympathy for the heretics because they were the "underdogs," the shift in attitude is also attributable to the new secular environment in which patristic studies flourish. Our subjects, no longer treated as sacrosanct, may have rude questions put to them, the answers to which may not cast favorable light on the heroes of yore. But then, sleuthing in history is like sleuthing elsewhere: dark corners are illuminated, skeletons in closets rattled.

Harnack, in a different context, expressed himself in a way appropriate to this topic: "We study history," he wrote, "in order to intervene in the course of history and we have a right and duty to do so. . . . To intervene in history—this means that we must reject the past when it reaches into the present only to block us."<sup>50</sup> Given his concern for the utility of scholarship for future cultural endeavors, Harnack might not have been entirely alarmed at the present direction of patristic studies.

There have been many other fascinating investigations of the patristic period of late—studies, for example, of the ancient church historians, especially Eusebius;<sup>51</sup> of patristic exegesis;<sup>52</sup> of the influence of classical forms on Christian writing;<sup>53</sup> of Judaism and its relation to early Christianity.<sup>54</sup> There have been magnificent biographies of Augustine<sup>55</sup> and of Origen<sup>56</sup> that will instruct any future student of the early Christian era. None of these endeavors should be slighted. The sheer abundance of subjects that could be here mentioned is itself a clear indication that patristics scholarship is being reborn. Inevitably we feel the teething pains, no doubt to be followed by the adolescent rebellion, but someday we shall surely see much of the recent scholarship on the Fathers—and the “Mothers”—of the early Christian era find a welcome home in the academic study of late antiquity.

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47. For example, material in Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (see above, n. 21).
48. Rosemary Ruether, "Misogynism and Virginal Feminism in the Fathers of the Church," in *Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974); "Mothers of the Church: Ascetic Women in the Late Patristic Age," in *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979); Ann Yarbrough, "Christianization in the Fourth Century: The Example of Roman Women," *Church History* 45 (1976) 149-165; Elizabeth A. Clark, *Jerome, Chrysostom and Friends: Essays and Translations*. Studies in Women and Religion 2 (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1979); *The Golden Bough, The Oaken Cross: The Virgilian Cento of Faltonia Betitia Proba*. AAR

- Texts and Translations 5 (Chico, Cal.: Scholars Press, 1981) (with Diane F. Hatch); *The Life of Melania the Younger: Introduction, Translation, Commentary* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, forthcoming 1983).
49. Patrick Henry, "Why is Contemporary Scholarship So Enamored of Ancient Heretics?," typescript, pp. 5-6.
  50. Adolf Harnack, "Über die Sicherheit," p. 7 (see above, n. 7), tr. in Pauck, *Heritage*, p. 340.
  51. Glen F. Chesnut, *The First Christian Histories. Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret and Evagrius* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977); Harold A. Drake, *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and New Translation of Eusebius' Tricennial Orations*. University of California Classical Studies 15 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Robert M. Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980); Timothy Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981).
  52. Rowan A. Greer, *The Captain of Our Salvation: A Study in the Patristic Exegesis of Hebrews*. Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese 15 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1973); Maurice Wiles, *The Divine Apostle: The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles in the Early Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967); T.E. Pollard, *Johannine Christology and the Early Church*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 13 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Peter J. Gorday, *The Place of Chapters Nine Through Eleven in the Argument of the Epistle to the Romans: A Study of the Romans Exegesis of Origen, John Chrysostom and Augustine* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, forthcoming 1983).
  53. Robert D. Sider, *Ancient Rhetoric and the Art of Tertullian* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971); Robert C. Gregg, *Consolation Philosophy: Greek and Christian Paideia in Basil and the Two Gregories*. Patristic Monograph Series 3 (Cambridge, Mass.: Philadelphia Patristic Foundation, 1975); Patricia Cox, *Biography in Late Antiquity: A Quest for the Holy Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, forthcoming 1983).
  54. Robert L. Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind: A Study of Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis and Theology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971); N.R.M. De Lange, *Origen and the Jews: Studies in Jewish-Christian Relations in Third-Century Palestine*. University of Cambridge Oriental Publications 25 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).
  55. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).
  56. Pierre Nautin, *Origène: sa vie et son oeuvre*. Christianisme antique 1 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977).

## The State and Future of Historical Theology

B.A. Gerrish

I don't believe I had ever heard of "historical theology" until I arrived at Union Theological Seminary, New York, a quarter of a century ago. I came from a minuscule denomination that called itself, without gratuitous modesty, "the Presbyterian Church of England." It numbered about three hundred congregations, and its theological outlook, not surprisingly, was comfortably uniform. However, it was dominated by the departed spirit, not of John Calvin, but of John Oman. I went to the church's theological college in Cambridge—misled by its name "Westminster College"—expecting that it would prove to be a Calvinist school. H.H. Farmer's reading list did have the notation against Calvin's *Institutes*: "On no account to be omitted." But he left us pretty much on our honor. If I came out of seminary nearly as devoted to Calvin as when I entered, it was no thanks to the education I received.

### I

Long ago though it is, I can still vividly recall the shock of the assiduously cultivated pluralism at Union Theological Seminary. And I was quite bowled over by the immense panorama of the history of Christian thought as unfolded by Wilhelm Pauck, even though, as we all know, he had the greatest difficulty in carrying the story beyond Martin Luther. Sometimes, so I am told, he would follow up several weeks of Luther with exactly one lecture on Calvin.

I had never met a real, live Lutheran in England, but even in Cambridge I had heard of Luther because Gordon Rupp and P.S. Watson were bringing out their Luther studies at just about the time I was there. Yet it was only the broadening influence of Pauck that eventually brought me to the point where I was able to write a paper on Calvin *and* Luther, and in it I permitted myself at last to make one or two critical remarks about Calvin. Pauck severely admonished me in his office: "Mr. *Garish* [that's how my name always sounded when he pronounced it], John Calvin is not your friend!" I was stunned into silence by this unexpected news and listened attentively as he assured me that, according to Karl Holl, Calvin was not wholly in error but in many ways a faithful disciple of Luther. Little did he realize just how profound an influence he had had on me. Some years later, I contributed to *Essays in Honor of Wilhelm Pauck* a study of "John Calvin on Luther." And I have fondly preserved his delightful letter of appreciation, in which he mischievously pledged: "From now on I shall make no remarks about Calvin and your estimate of him that will raise any doubts whatsoever."

It wasn't only Luther whom Pauck taught me to appreciate: it was also through him that I was first exposed to Thomas Aquinas. I remember the vividness with which he detailed the fate of Thomas's mortal remains; and I remember much of what he said about Thomas's doctrine of justification by *grace*, the heavy emphasis on the word "grace" being evidently intended both to contrast Thomas's thought with the Lutheran *sola fide* and to caution Protestants generally not to attribute to Thomas the error of justification by works. My appreciation for Thomas has grown over the years—although, I sometimes suspect, in direct proportion to the decreasing appreciation for Thomas among Roman Catholic students.

But what really captivated me—and changed my future course—was precisely historical theology: that is, the total panorama of Christian theological history as Pauck introduced me to it. I believe I signed up for just about every course he listed in the catalogue. Of the only two exceptions I can recall, one, I think, was on the Anglican divine Richard Hooker. Pauck didn't actually teach the course while I was at Union, and I'm not sure that he ever did. With respect to the other course, however, which he *did* offer, I have to confess in retrospect that I made a mistake. It was during my time at Union—again, if I remember rightly—that he launched his Schleiermacher seminar, and I could not imagine at the time that I had anything to learn from Schleiermacher. I have since seen the error of my ways: the fact is that, much though I learned from my teacher, I could and should have learned more.

## II

One of the boldest and most profoundly illuminating claims to be found in Schleiermacher is that dogmatics should be classified as a part of historical theology. Given our own usage, according to which historical theology is the history of theology, Schleiermacher's point is only too easily misunderstood. A student who dropped out of our Chicago Ph.D. program in theology once wrote me a letter in which he explained that I was one of the main reasons for his discontinuing his studies: he took me to task for saying that dogmatics was historical theology, which he took to mean that I wrote it off as a thing of the past. It was a very angry letter, but I know he meant it for good because his letterhead said "From the Priory of the Holy Spirit." (And I have the documentary evidence for that.) Of course, I had no difficulty in recognizing that he had misconstrued, and attributed to me, Schleiermacher's classification of dogmatics with historical theology.

What Schleiermacher really meant is well expressed in a single sentence in the first edition of his *Brief Outline on the Study of Theology*, a sentence that struck me with the force of a revelation when I first read



it. Its epigrammatic, sententious style is hard to echo in English, but it goes roughly like this: "The Christian church, as the community requiring leadership [i.e., educated ministers], is a phenomenon of change [*ein Werdendes*], in which at every moment the present must be grasped as the product of the past and the germ of the future."

Now it appears that Schleiermacher didn't like that proposition as much as I do, since he dropped it from the second edition. But the idea remains. And I suppose you could say that it asserts nothing more than the commonplace of historicism in Troeltsch's *positive* sense. But that is exactly why I find it so striking: it is a programmatic affirmation—and surely one of the earliest—of the historicizing of theology. As Troeltsch recognized, Schleiermacher's notion of theology springs out of a new, sociological understanding of the church. And I know I'm on the right lines when I move from Schleiermacher to Troeltsch, because Marion Pauck tells us that Ernst Troeltsch was "the only man who might be described as Pauck's 'hero.' "

The one point I wish to contribute, then, is this: that theological studies—as a whole and in their essential nature—have an inescapably historical character. The future of historical theology is therefore a question not only of finding a place for the history of Christian thought, but also of keeping a firm grasp on the historical character of theology. The object of theological studies as such is mobile, something in ceaseless change: that is, the Christian church. And dogmatics is the part of theological studies that concerns itself with the changing community on its believing, thinking side. In short, a modern dogmatics—that is, a dogmatics that takes historical consciousness seriously—has to be a historical theology because its object of reflection is a phenomenon of never ending historical flux.

### III

I cannot enlarge here on my one point. But consider two alternative ideas of what Christian theology does. There is, first, the theology Schleiermacher inherited, though chastened by the Enlightenment: call it "orthodoxy." Whether in its Roman Catholic or in its Protestant version, orthodoxy was persuaded that theological reflection had as its object immutable truths. The conception is essentially the same whether the immutable truths are embodied in the infallible oracles of Scripture or in the authoritative dogmas of the church. Properly historical understanding is in this view irrelevant, or even impossible: what is called "church history" or "historical theology" is merely a branch of confessional polemics, designed to show that *we* have the immutable truths and *you* don't.



Schleiermacher's position differs, secondly, from John Henry Newman's, which followed shortly afterwards. The concept of dogma, which strictly speaking is obsolete for Schleiermacher, remains for Newman even though he has a profound sense of the historical conditions under which dogmas emerge. The difference, I think, can be indicated by saying that, whereas for Schleiermacher the datum of theological reflection is *ein Werdendes*, for Newman it is *ein Gewordenes*. The cycle of growth, in Newman's idea of development, achieves its finality in dogma; in Schleiermacher's conception the cycle of growth dissolves dogmas—indeed, the theologian hastens their dissolution by subjecting them to criticism.

And that, of course, is something I could have learned much earlier from Wilhelm Pauck. I recall a day at Union Theological Seminary when we invited him to address the graduate students in theology and asked him to tell us, not where Luther stood, but where he himself stood. I think it can be fairly reported that what we heard was a lot closer to Harnack than to Luther. At a time when it wasn't popular, he insisted that there would eventually be a swing of interest back—behind neo-orthodoxy—to Schleiermacher, Harnack, Holl, and Troeltsch. He insisted, in fact, that theology would have to become historical again. It is a remarkable tribute to him that he impressed on his students his own dual interest in the Reformation and liberal Protestantism, backed up by the infectious zeal of his personality. Some of us took longer than others to learn his lessons.

## Concerning the Heritage of the Reformation

David W. Lotz

Two eminent scholars left their permanent impress upon the young Wilhelm Pauck during his university study at Berlin in the early 1920s: Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923) and Karl Holl (1866-1926). Throughout his own illustrious career as a virtuoso teacher and master practitioner of the historical theologian's craft, Wilhelm Pauck has remained loyal to the spirit, if not always the letter, of his two great mentors.

This dual loyalty is remarkable, not least, because Troeltsch and Holl often found themselves at odds in both the methods and the conclusions of their respective scholarly labors. In this instance their brilliant pupil found a way to hold together the animating impulses and most significant findings of his otherwise conflicting teachers, thereby achieving what Troeltsch himself would have called a "creative compromise" in the realm of ideas.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps one could say, without undue simplification, that Troeltsch's legacy is most evident in Wilhelm Pauck's lifelong, unqualified insistence that "a true and truthful understanding and interpretation of the Christian gospel in the modern world" must be a fully *historical* understanding and interpretation: one, that is, which is unsparingly *critical* because mindful that the gospel is available only in man-made traditions, or temporary historical forms, which cannot as such be equated with divine truth; and, at the same time, one which is genuinely *self-critical* because mindful of its own contingency, or historical relativity, and thus of its surpassability.<sup>2</sup>

Like Troeltsch, Professor Pauck has resolutely opposed all attempts to absolutize the Christian gospel by withdrawing it from the relativities of historical existence. These relativities must be honestly confronted, not finessed or overcome by strategies for locating Jesus and his message in some ontologically unique sphere of redemptive history; or by appeal to timeless (and so changeless) confessions, creeds, dogmas; or by the heteronomous imposition of ecclesiastical authority; or by ahistorical attempts to repristinate the primitive Christian kerygma or the theology of the Protestant reformers.<sup>3</sup> I take it that these "prohibitions" of Troeltsch (and Harnack), mediated to the American scene by Wilhelm Pauck, are still paradigmatic for the work of historical theologians.<sup>4</sup>

It was Karl Holl, of course, who turned Wilhelm Pauck to Reformation history and theology, above all to Luther.<sup>5</sup> Holl's magisterial volume of Luther essays, published in 1921, greatly impressed the young theological student—much more so than another famous book which appeared in the same year, Karl Barth's Romans commentary.<sup>6</sup> No earnest student of Troeltsch and Holl could ever concur with Barth's judgment that church

history is but an auxiliary theological discipline, the handmaiden of dogmatics.<sup>7</sup>

Holl had come to Luther scholarship out of his previous work as an editor of the Greek church fathers, thus with superior philological equipment and an uncompromising fidelity to the sources. In Luther research this meant fidelity to the new critical edition of Luther's works published at Weimar beginning in 1883. It is not surprising, therefore, that Holl was the first Luther scholar to become truly accomplished in the use of the Weimar *Ausgabe*, or that he should have conveyed his exacting standards of scholarship to Wilhelm Pauck and the other members of his seminar. Nor is it surprising that Holl should have censured Troeltsch for *his* overreliance on outdated Luther editions and on secondary literature.<sup>8</sup>

Whereas Holl, however, tended to look back from the Reformation to the Middle Ages and the early church, his student Pauck has ever concerned himself with the appropriation and reinterpretation of Reformation religious thought at the hands of the great liberal theologians of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In this respect Wilhelm Pauck has chosen to pursue a theme typical of Troeltsch—"the significance of Protestantism for the modern world," but has done so on the basis of the meticulous scholarship which typified Holl.<sup>9</sup>

In what follows I want to comment on the current state and prospects of Reformation and Luther studies, taking as my guiding thought that theme which is so inseparably joined with the name and achievements of Wilhelm Pauck: "the heritage of the Reformation."

Earlier in this century Reformation studies, at least on the European scene, were dominated by a "history of theology" perspective, by massive attention to the thought of the magisterial reformers with a view to taking up their leading motifs into Protestant systematic theology. This recovery of Reformation theology, above all Luther's, in the interest of reconstructing Evangelical dogmatics, has gone under the name of the "Luther renaissance" (with a parallel renaissance occurring in Calvin and Zwingli studies).

Chief credit for this development is usually given to Karl Holl by virtue of his great *Lutherbuch* of 1921, as well as to Karl Barth, Friedrich Gogarten, Emil Brunner, and their allies, owing to their insistent calls for a return to the reformers. In my view, however, historical justice requires that one trace the main impetus for this remarkable development back to the labors of Albrecht Ritschl and the Ritschlian school in the period from 1870 to the Great War. It is too often forgotten that Holl was Adolf von Harnack's student, as Harnack was Ritschl's. The time has come, indeed it is long overdue, for Reformation scholars, especially Luther scholars, to acknowledge their debt of gratitude to Ritschl and the Ritschlians.<sup>10</sup>

In any case, this preoccupation with Reformation theology, for all its fruitfulness for modern Protestantism, threatened to end up in the loss of the Reformation as a determinate event in church history and European history.<sup>11</sup> Reformation studies, in short, were in danger of becoming an adjunct to *Dogmengeschichte*. A reaction has inevitably set in, one intent upon locating, and investigating, the Reformation in its concrete *Sitz im Leben* in the late Middle Ages and early modern Europe. Today it is taken for granted that the historian, including the historical theologian, will no longer treat sixteenth-century religious ideas and reform proposals as free-floating, timeless, quasi-metaphysical entities, but will interpret and appraise them by reference to their time-specific social, political, economic, and intellectual milieu. One might say that historians have again returned the Reformation to the historical past.

Three basic research topics have engaged Reformation historians and Luther scholars for the past twenty years or so: (1) the relationship of the Reformation to the intellectual and religious currents of the late Middle Ages, in particular the *via moderna* and the *devotio moderna*, with special attention to the young Luther's development from a late medieval scholastic to an evangelical theologian; (2) the reception and spread of the Reformation in the towns, cities, territories, and cantons of the Empire and Swiss Confederation, with special attention to the complex links between the reformers' message and contemporary social groups; and (3) the perennial problem of the Reformation's relationship to Northern Humanism and the Renaissance, with special attention to the question of whether, and in what respects, the Reformation constitutes the theological expression, perhaps the fulfillment, of Renaissance culture.<sup>12</sup> Reformation historiography during these years has also given heightened attention to the so-called radical reformers, as well as to the social history of Anabaptism, and has witnessed a strikingly positive reappraisal of Luther and the Reformation by Roman Catholic scholars.<sup>13</sup>

Research gains in each of these areas has been great. One can even say that they have transformed the discipline as a whole. Yet there surely remains a good deal of important *unfinished* business in Reformation historiography. The attention lavished upon the medieval *provenance* of the Reformation has not been matched by comparable attention to the *heritage* of the Reformation in the modern world. For persons who take Wilhelm Pauck's work seriously, this relative neglect of his great theme is a cause for concern, and a call to shoulder the task anew. Historians, I think, are responsible not only for saying what a phenomenon *was*, or whence it took its rise and how it established itself in this place and that, but also for telling us what this phenomenon *became*, how it entered into and shaped the ongoing course of historical life. History is a study of development and growth no less than of origins.

Now it is indisputable that the heirs of the Protestant Reformation,



from the sixteenth century to the present day, have taken it to be more than a mere episode in Western history and church history. They have viewed it, rather, as an epoch-making event and thus as an *ever-formative* event in modern church and society. It is well and good for high-minded Reformation historians, properly fearful of giving place to anachronism, to keep the object of their study firmly secured in its pastness. The fact remains, however, that countless persons have never perceived the Protestant Reformation as past, but have wished to live in it and out of it. And *that* fact is a historical fact, and so properly invites the attention of the Reformation historian.

To date, however, we have no full-scale study of how the Reformation of the sixteenth century has been imaged and interpreted by leading representatives of post-Reformation thought, including philosophers and literati as well as historians, theologians, and ecclesiasts. We still await the historiographer who will do for the Reformation what Wallace Ferguson did for the Renaissance over thirty years ago in his book *The Renaissance in Historical Thought: Five Centuries of Interpretation* (1948).

The theme of the heritage of the Reformation, I wish to insist, is not one that is arbitrarily imposed on refractory evidence. Much of German (and European) cultural and religious history, from Lessing and Herder to Dilthey and Troeltsch, would be badly misrepresented, if not unintelligible, without due attention to the axial importance attached to the Protestant Reformation by the foremost spokesmen for the German Enlightenment, Classicism, Romanticism, Idealism, and Neo-Protestantism.<sup>14</sup> One recalls that Hegel, for example, styled the Reformation "the all-illuminating sun which follows the daybreak at the end of the Middle Ages." Hegel, indeed, accorded Luther and the Reformation eschatological dignity since with them one has to do with "the new, the last banner. . . around which the nations gather, the flag of the free spirit."<sup>15</sup>

Hegel's rhetoric may no longer be *à la mode*, but his linkage of Reformation with freedom and self-determination is no uniquely Hegelian motif. Steven Ozment closes his recent book, *The Age of Reform 1250-1550*, with the salutary reminder that "ideas, like energy, are transformed, not destroyed":

In assessing the Reformation [he continues] we should also appreciate the way its original goals survived in new forms and under the auspices of new authorities. By its original teaching and example, the Reformation, above all, encouraged people to resist religious tyranny; many scholars view it also as a major force for political freedom and social justice, at least before the Peasants' Revolt of 1525 worked to restrict its social promise.<sup>16</sup>

This conclusion that the Protestant Reformation, judged by its original



message and deepest intentions, means freedom, “resistance to the bullying of the conscience” (Ozment), is the characteristic theme of Luther’s late eighteenth and nineteenth-century admirers and successors. The complex story of how they arrived at this theme, and what they made of it, belongs no less to the history of the Reformation, *if* we but grant that the “age of reform” did not come to a close in 1550, and that the “original goals” of the Reformation have survived (or, at least, may have survived) “in new forms and under the auspices of new authorities” in centuries other than the sixteenth.

The “heritage of the Reformation,” moreover, is a heuristic construct which has not yet been given its due weight in histories of nineteenth-century Protestant thought. I agree with Brian Gerrish that “the question of nineteenth-century Protestant thought was precisely that of tradition and the modern world: What is to be done with the Reformation heritage in a world of which Calvin never dreamed?”<sup>17</sup> The perverse notion that the Reformation heritage did not really matter to nineteenth-century liberal Protestantism—that Schleiermacher and his successors simply abandoned the truth of the “tradition” in the name of truthfulness to “modernity”—is a canard of neo-orthodox historiography. The hoax has been exposed. It still remains, however, to write a comprehensive history of nineteenth-century theology and religious thought which exhibits, at every point, liberal Protestantism’s creative dialogue with, and critical conservation of, the Reformation tradition.

No tribute to Wilhelm Pauck would be complete without some attention to the present state of Luther studies. Of the making of many books and essays on Martin Luther there is surely no end, as the annual bibliographies in the *Lutherjahrbuch* and the *Archive for Reformation History* show at a glance. Yet in spite of the vast amount of printer’s ink expended on Luther studies, and notwithstanding the permanent literary monuments erected by the Luther renaissance now past, Gerhard Ebeling, writing in 1964, could lament the widespread *Luthervergessenheit*, the amnesia about Luther, among today’s educated public.<sup>18</sup>

No doubt a major contributing factor to this distressing state of affairs is the lack of a first-rate scholarly, yet popular, biography of Luther spanning his entire career. Roland Bainton’s estimable *Here I Stand* (1950) becomes quite episodic in its treatment of Luther after 1525. Likewise, in his massive *Luther and His Times* (1950), Ernest Schwiebert devotes only sixteen of 752 pages of text to Luther after the 1530 Diet of Augsburg. The sober truth is that we still await an adequate replacement for Julius Köstlin’s two volume biography, *Martin Luther: Sein Leben und seine Schriften*, published as long ago as 1875 (reworked by Georg Kawerau, 2 vols., 1903). To be sure, alongside Heinrich Boehmer’s *Der junge Luther* (1925) and Robert Herndon Fife’s *The Revolt of Martin Luther* (1957), we now have Martin Brecht’s superb *Martin Luther: Sein Weg zur Reformation 1483-1521* (1981) and Heinrich Bornkamm’s masterly *Martin*

*Luther in der Mitte seines Lebens* (posthumously published in 1979), which together take the story up to 1530.<sup>19</sup> But the "old Luther" has yet to be portrayed in the requisite detail and depth, although H.G. Haile's *Luther: An Experiment in Biography* (1980) is a commendable step in this direction. Still, we need a comprehensive Luther biography in the modern mode, one combining a penetrating knowledge of the sources with empathic criticism, and free of all the usual traces of Protestant hagiography. We need, in short, someone who will presently do for Dr. Luther what Jackson Bate has recently done for Dr. Johnson.<sup>20</sup>

I suspect, however, that biography is only a partial solution to the larger problem of rehabilitating Luther in our time. Wilhelm Pauck once observed that Reinhold Niebuhr's estimate of "the nature and destiny of man" owed far more to Luther than Niebuhr himself was aware of or willing to admit.<sup>21</sup> Quite so. Yet Niebuhr's magnum opus is in many respects superannuated, not least because of its indebtedness to Luther and classic Reformation theology. One has only to take up a serious work of contemporary cultural criticism—such as the books of Philip Rieff, George Steiner, Lionel Trilling, Christopher Lasch—to see that two figures dominate modern analyses of the human condition: Marx and Freud.<sup>22</sup>

Here I can only register my conviction that Luther's voice will again be heard by the cultured public if and when it is sounded contrapuntally to the voices of Marx and Freud. Reformation scholars and historical theologians, unfortunately, have yet to take even modest steps in this direction.<sup>23</sup>

In any event, however much we may otherwise differ in our reading of the present state and prospects of Reformation and Luther studies, I am confident that we unanimously assent to at least one proposition: such studies would remain impoverished without the preeminent contributions of our unforgettable teacher, colleague, and friend, Wilhelm Pauck, to whom, with affection and esteem, we present this garland of tributes on the occasion of his eightieth birthday.

#### Notes

1. On Pauck's student years at Berlin, and for other biographical data, see Marion Hausner Pauck, "Wilhelm Pauck: A Biographical Essay," in *Interpreters of Luther: Essays in Honor of Wilhelm Pauck*, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (Philadelphia, 1968), pp. 335-61. Pelikan's introduction ("Wilhelm Pauck: A Tribute," pp. 1-8) is a fine summary statement of Pauck's leading concerns and scholarly achievements.
2. See Wilhelm Pauck, "A Defense of Liberalism [1947]," in *The Heritage of the Reformation*, rev. ed. (Glencoe, Ill., 1961), pp. 325-35.

3. Cf. Wilhelm Pauck, "Adolf von Harnack's Interpretation of Church History [1954]," in *Heritage*, pp. 345-46: "No historical form of Christianity must be absolutized or regarded as normative or authoritative. Instead, we must recognize that, though we cannot be Christians except through the medium of concrete historical traditions, it is not these traditions but their ultimate historical source that can be the fountain of Christian faith and life, namely, the gospel of Jesus Christ. Where the gospel as Jesus proclaimed it is believed, there is Christianity, and this gospel does not require a normative historical form (in doctrine, dogma, liturgy, church polity, etc.) in order to produce belief." Though here recounting Harnack's position, Pauck obviously concurs. Whether "the gospel as Jesus proclaimed it" is itself as *homogeneous* a phenomenon and as *historically definite* as Harnack (and Pauck) assumed, is questionable. Cf. James M. Robinson and Helmut Koester, *Trajectories through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia, 1971), p. 277: "As long as one was able to assume a clearly formulated point of departure, like *the* primitive kerygma, or the biblical Christ, it was possible to understand hermeneutic as the analysis of new world views or religious doctrines, which may or may not have altered the more original clear-cut religious truth. The truth of the more primitive kerygma thus served as the criterion. But this hermeneutical policy does not meet fully the problem of the historical Jesus." Koester goes on to speak of "the ambiguous complexity of the historical phenomenon of the earthly Jesus" (p. 278).
4. See Wilhelm Pauck, *Harnack and Troeltsch: Two Historical Theologians* (New York, 1968). Harnack, incidentally, had retired from full-time teaching at Berlin in 1920 but continued as lecturer emeritus, in which connection Pauck attended two of his lecture courses. Pauck's scholarly interest in Harnack is of relatively recent origin.
5. The history of twentieth-century Luther-Melanchthon-Zwingli research could be written, in no small degree, as the story of the career of Holl's premier students. Their number includes, besides Pauck, Emanuel Hirsch, Heinrich Bornkamm, Fritz Blanke, Hanns Rückert, Erich Vogelsang, and Robert Stupperich. On Holl as Luther scholar, see H. Rückert, "Karl Holl: Ein Nachruf," *Luther* 8 (1926) 34-43; Otto Wolff, *Die Haupttypen der neueren Lutherdeutung* (Stuttgart, 1938), pp. 318-84; R. Stupperich, "Karl Holl als Lutherforscher," *Luther* 37 (1966) 112-21; Walter Bodenstein, *Die Theologie Karl Holls im Spiegel des antiken und reformatorischen Christentums* (Berlin, 1968).
6. Karl Holl, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte*, Band I: *Luther* (Tübingen, 1921; 2nd and 3rd rev. ed., 1923).

7. Cf. Wilhelm Pauck, "A Brief Criticism of Barth's *Dogmatics* [1957]," in *Heritage*, p. 358: "Barth says that church history is merely an auxiliary theological discipline, because he believes that the church must be guided by dogmatic theology oriented to the Bible. But dogmatic speculation, even if it is based on the Bible, cannot help us. What we need most is historical understanding and not theosophy. The churches have more need of a Harnack than of a Barth."
8. Cf. Karl Bauer, "Luther bei Troeltsch und bei Holl," *Die christliche Welt* 37 (1923) 36-39. On Troeltsch's Luther-Reformation interpretation, see Theodor Brieger, "Randbemerkungen zu Troeltschs Vortrag über 'Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt'," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 27 (1906) 348-55; E. Förster, "Die Darstellung des lutherischen Protestantismus in E. Troeltschs 'Soziallehren,'" *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, Neue Folge 1 (1920) 103-16; Roland H. Bainton, "Ernst Troeltsch—Thirty Years After," *Theology Today* 8 (1951) 70-96; Hermann Fischer, "Luther und seine Reformation in der Sicht Ernst Troeltschs," *Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie* 5 (1963) 132-72; E.W. Kohls, "Das Bild der Reformation bei Wilhelm Dilthey, Adolf von Harnack und Ernst Troeltsch," *Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie* 11 (1969) 269-91; Klaus Penzel, "Ernst Troeltsch on Luther," in *Interpreters of Luther*, pp. 275-303.
9. Holl, to be sure, also pursued the theme "Reformation and modernity" in a number of essays, e.g., "Die Kulturbedeutung der Reformation" (originally given as a lecture in 1911, revised in 1918, and published in *Gesammelte Aufsätze* I, 359-412; Eng. trans. by Karl and Barbara Hertz and John H. Lichtblau, with an Introduction by Wilhelm Pauck, *The Cultural Significance of the Reformation* [Cleveland/New York, 1959]). This essay is a rejoinder to Troeltsch's tract, *Die Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die Entstehung der modernen Welt* (Munich/Berlin, 1906, 2nd rev. ed. 1911; Eng. trans. by W. Montgomery, *Protestantism and Progress* [New York, 1912; reprinted Boston, 1958]).
10. I have argued the case for the Ritschlian origins of the Luther renaissance in my book, *Ritschl and Luther: A Fresh Perspective on Albrecht Ritschl's Theology in the Light of His Luther Study* (New York/Nashville, 1974). See also David W. Lotz, "Albrecht Ritschl and the Unfinished Reformation," *Harvard Theological Review* 73 (1980) 337-72.
11. Cf. Bernd Moeller, *Imperial Cities and the Reformation: Three Essays*, ed. and trans. H.C. Erik Midelfort and Mark U. Edwards, Jr. (Philadelphia, 1972), p. 7: "Perhaps it is not an exaggeration to speak of a contemporary crisis in theological Reformation research. To put it in



a nutshell, it seems that we are threatened with losing the Reformation as an event in *church* history. In the last decades our research has been concentrated almost exclusively on Reformation *theology*" (italics in original). Moeller was writing in 1965.

12. The present state of research in each of these areas is displayed in such publications as *The Reformation in Medieval Perspective*, ed. Steven E. Ozment (Chicago, 1971); *The Social History of the Reformation (In Honor of Harold J. Grimm)*, ed. Lawrence P. Buck and Jonathan W. Zophy (Columbus, Ohio, 1972); *Luther and the Dawn of the Modern Era*, ed. Heiko A. Oberman (Leiden, 1974); *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, ed. Charles Trinkaus and H.A. Oberman (Leiden, 1974); *Transition and Revolution: Problems and Issues of European Renaissance and Reformation History*, ed. Robert M. Kingdon (Minneapolis, 1974); *Itinerarium Italicum (Festschrift for Paul Oskar Kristeller)*, ed. H.A. Oberman and Thomas A. Brady (Leiden, 1975); and S. Ozment, *The Reformation in the Cities* (New Haven/London, 1975).
13. For recent Roman Catholic Luther scholarship, see Werner Beyna, *Das moderne katholische Lutherbild* (Essen, 1969); Albert Brandenburg, *Martin Luther gegenwärtig: katholische Lutherstudien* (Munich, 1969); August Hasler, *Luther in der katholischen Dogmatik* (Munich, 1968); Peter Manns, *Lutherforschung heute: Krise und Aufbruch* (Wiesbaden, 1967); Otto H. Pesch, "Twenty Years of Catholic Luther Research," *Lutheran World* 13 (1966) 303-16; Richard Stauffer, *Luther as Seen By Catholics* (London, 1967). The course of research in the Radical Reformation and Anabaptism is traced by George H. Williams, "Studies in the Radical Reformation (1517-1618): A Bibliographical Survey of Research since 1939," *Church History* 27 (1958) 46-69, 124-60; and in the two bibliographies prepared by Hans J. Hillerbrand, *A Bibliography of Anabaptism 1520-1630* (Elkart, Ind., 1962); *A Bibliography of Anabaptism 1520-1630: A Sequel, 1962-1974* (St. Louis: Center for Reformation Research, 1975).
14. Cf. Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther im Spiegel der deutschen Geistesgeschichte*, 2nd rev. ed. (Heidelberg, 1970); Karl Forster, ed., *Wandlungen des Lutherbildes: Studien und Berichte der Katholischen Akademie in Bayern* (Würzburg, 1966); F.W. Kantzenbach, "Lutherverständnis zwischen Erweckung und Idealismus," *Luther* 36 (1965) 9-30; E.W. Kohls, "Das Bild der Reformation in der Geisteswissenschaft des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie* 9(1967) 229-46; Walther von Loewenich, *Luther und der Neuprotestantismus* (Witten, 1963); Horst Stephan, *Luther in den Wandlungen seiner Kirche*, 2nd rev. ed. (Berlin, 1951).



15. See Gerhard Ebeling, "Luther and the Beginning of the Modern Age," in *Luther and the Dawn of the Modern Era*, pp. 11-39.
16. Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform 1250-1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven/London, 1980), pp. 436-37.
17. B.A. Gerrish, *Tradition and the Modern World: Reformed Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago/London, 1978), p. x. In this connection Gerrish notes that "the relative neglect of Calvin research, in comparison with the prodigious output of the Luther scholars . . . , is little short of scandalous." He also seconds the observation of Gerhard Krodel that "it is no longer the Anabaptists but Zwingli and Calvin who are in danger of becoming the stepchildren of Reformation research."
18. Gerhard Ebeling, *Luther: An Introduction to His Thought*, trans. R.A. Wilson (Philadelphia, 1970), p. 29. Paul Tillich made this same point as long ago as 1928, noting that the Luther renaissance had not prevented widespread ignorance of the cardinal Reformation doctrine of justification (*The Protestant Era*, trans. James Luther Adams, abridged ed. [Chicago, 1957], p. 196).
19. The third ed. of Boehmer's biography was published in 1939, edited by Heinrich Bornkamm. The second ed. of 1929 has been translated by John W. Doberstein and Theodore G. Tappert, *Martin Luther: Road to Reformation* (Philadelphia, 1946; reprinted New York, 1957). The Luther biographies of Brecht and Bornkamm are now being translated for publication by Fortress Press.
20. W. Jackson Bate, *Samuel Johnson* (New York, 1977).
21. Wilhelm Pauck, "Luther and the Reformation" [1946], in *Heritage*, p. 13.
22. Cf. Philip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith After Freud* (New York/London, 1966); George Steiner, *In Bluebeard's Castle: Some Notes Towards the Redefinition of Culture* (New Haven, 1971); Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972); Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York, 1978).
23. However, two essays by Lewis W. Spitz at least point in this direction: "Luther's Impact on Modern Views of Man," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 41 (1977) 26-43; "Reformation and Humanity in Marxist Historical Research," *Lutheran World* 16 (1969) 124-39.

## 5.

## WILHELM PAUCK: CONSTRUCTIVE THEOLOGIAN

Joseph Sittler

[This address was delivered in 1968 at Nashville, Tennessee, on the occasion of presenting Wilhelm Pauck with the Festschrift in his honor edited by Jaroslav Pelikan, *Interpreters of Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968). At the time Dr. Sittler was Professor of Systematic Theology in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago.]



Marion and Wilhelm Pauck, 1975 (in Chicago)

credit: Carl Hester

My assignment is to speak of the contributions of Wilhelm Pauck to what, in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, is gallantly called Constructive Theology.

To the uninstructed among us who, operating with ordinary logic, may muse that the opposite of that is *destructive* theology, and who may become confused by their own clarity, I can only report that there *is* such a thing, that its genesis and development occurred during Professor Pauck's Chicago years, and that the rationale for it, even where elaborated, is to be weighed in the mood with which Wordsworth concludes his *Intimations of Immortality*:

"Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

So there is such a thing; and Professor Pauck's contributions to it were strong, steady, productive—and *indirect*. The strength, steadiness and productivity I need not speak of; the volume of essays is sufficient attestation. But the indirect nature of the contribution, that *must* be spoken of if the truth is to be told. The fascination and the difficulty of my assignment is to recollect with richness and clarity, and to find a way to state an accomplishment which is as clear as it is elusive.

Let me first state formally *what* the accomplishment is, and then try to describe the *way* of it. It is possible to say of very few men that they *established a discipline* in the American theological scene. One has only to look at the roster of those who are presently working in the field of the history of Christian thought, and look to the antecedents of the majority of them, to secure the statement. Now this establishment of a discipline was *not* done by a detached career of scholarship ensconced within a university and principally engaged in research and writing; it was done in *full engagement with students* in classrooms and seminars. Professor Pauck practiced the tradition of historical theology in full view of the academic public, and by his constant *exemplification* of what he believed about the historical character of the Christian faith he transmitted to generations of students the allure and the challenge of his own dedication. That Professor Pauck might have gone another way with equal force is a matter for conjecture; that the way of transmission in the living engagement of the classroom is a way that has been *enormously fruitful* is a matter of fact.



As a preface to an effort which I shall make in a moment to specify the indirect manner by which so great a contribution to theological maturity has been made, it is necessary to describe the situation to which the man came. I do not know what was natural and what was calculated in Professor Pauck's early operations with American students, but no conceivable calculation could better have contrived to relate what needed doing in the late 'twenties and a man equipped to do it!

With a velocity and depth that is astounding, the young German scholar brought under control two recalcitrant entities that other Continental scholars have not managed in a lifetime: the American religious scene and the American language. A word about each. The local history, the American particularity of the *transplanted* European religious communities had a certain continuity with his experience. What is surprising is the intimacy and historical sensitivity with which he came to know the religious communities that *began* in this place: their formative personalities, the flavor of their piety, the peculiarly American story of their development in the matrix of the frontier and revivalism, and the tangled ethnic strands in their history. It is one thing to learn Calvinistic and Lutheran communities here, quite another to understand the Church of Christ, the Mormons, the Assemblies of God.

To speak American English with force, grace, nuance and precision is a virtue which not many native academicians aspire to or achieve. Professor Pauck did it, and that achievement is both admirable in itself and, when added to his episodic familiarity with American religious and cultural history, accounts for the early and steadily matured ability to deal with the students who came under his tutelage.

We can now move in upon the *indirect but concrete pedagogical procedures* by which, operating always historically, Professor Pauck contributed to American theological reflection.

Recall, as many of you can, the students who came to our schools in the 'thirties and 'forties. Very many of these were from religious communities and non-cosmopolitan places in which it was not possible to compare provincial experience with catholic complexity and fulness. Threads of the Christian tradition were esteemed as main themes; sectarian peculiarities were adjudged normative. The intensity with which the uncritically transmitted was known and esteemed had to be both religiously honored *and* historically modified. These many threads of tradition—tangled or simple, febrile or tough, bright with the flush of faith-as-feeling or hard pale with the pallor of faith as pure thought—these strands of religious fact he wove into a total fabric: the community of faith in its historical actuality.

But I promised to be concrete. How, as a matter of pedagogical performance, was this accomplished? At this moment I must ask each of you who has been his student to roll your memory back to whatever particular classroom you remember. I have done that; and I propose a typology of Pauckian pedagogical methodology. It has, of course, three parts. And the substance of each of these techniques can be delivered by a characteristic instance.

First, the method of *feigned amazement*. The situation that evoked this particular operation was commonly somewhat as follows. To the statement that opened each period, "Are there any questions?," imagine a helpless lad fumbling to fit the previous lecture into the too small confines of his tradition, his face puzzled and wan with the effort. Such a student asks a question which discloses that he has not even entertained the *possibility* that Christian theology may elaborate its context by an analysis and assessment of man as the subject of cultural creativity. Into just such a situation Professor Pauck would leap with what I have called the method of feigned amazement—calculatedly feigned, to be sure, and accompanied by an operation of the lifted eyebrow for which the visage of Mr. W.C. Fields is the only parallel—and would say to the student, "Young man, is it possible that you have not heard of Friedrich Ernst Daniel Schleiermacher?" The enveloping resonance of the very *name* "Schleiermacher" had the effect which a poet has put in the doublet:

". . . The very name was like a bell  
To summon me to heaven or to hell."

Schleiermacher! The sonority of the word was like great black clouds of hopeless ignorance swirling around the head. This method might also be called stimulation to learning by the cattle-prod of astonishment.

The second method, which I will illustrate in a moment, was sometimes exercised with such manifest glee as to cause the class to long for the bell. For we had to sit knowing that there, but for the grace of God, anyone of us might someday be skewered, turned and browned. The most likely victim of this method, which I shall call the *relentless roast*, was a lad who had come to the Divinity School well turned-out with dogmatic, biblical, liturgical, cultic equipment in a fine state of repair and coherence, and who had mistaken serenity within a familiar microcosmos for Catholic historical tradition.

If by some chance such a person disclosed an untroubled and cozy *satisfaction* within his sub-culture, the slow roast was on! Because Lutherans and Episcopalians are peculiarly tempted in this matter, it was often children of these churches who became chosen material for special treat-

ment. If in the front row there sat such an one, and especially if his inward serenity were accompanied by outward composure, an entire lecture would be modified to plant demolition bombs within his theological walls. Isaac Watts had indeed written of

Our *shelter* from the stormy blast,  
And our eternal home—

but Professor Pauck's passion was to ensure that the subject of that apostrophe should be clearly understood as the *God* who is our help in ages past and our hope for years to come, and not Bishop Butler in the bag or Franz Pieper in the pocket. I do not know enough of Professor Pauck's personal sessions with students to affirm with any certainty that he was adept at binding the wounded, but my experience of him as a classroom teacher provides solid evidence that he wounded the bound!

The last of the three methods I call the *snow-job*. In the exercise of it Professor Pauck was at his steady job: the invasion of all mono-dimensional solidarities by the powers of historical interpretation. This method was reserved for hard cases, particularly cases whose rigidity was constituted by aplomb and complacency, or by the possession of prestigious antecedents, rather than by simplicity of mind, ignorance, or misinformation. Such problems, he apparently thought, must be attacked from above: the instrument for correction must be forged of the same metal as constituted the complacency.

The instance I recall was a course on the theology of Luther. There was in it a young man fresh from Harvard College. His collar was buttoned-down and so was his mind. The virility, the religious turbulence, the sheer fervor of Luther's language, manner, spirit had an *unbuttoned*, rushing quality that was plainly unacceptable; and the fastidiousness of nature which was troubled by Professor Pauck's sympathetic recapitulation of Luther's thought was clearly mirrored upon the annoyed student's face. And inasmuch as such detachment must be dealt with in an appropriate fashion, Professor Pauck halted his pacing directly before this poor fellow and snowed him with a full treatment: line upon line from Luther's text, all in the imperial rolling resonance of *Latin*. When the student raised his head as if to inquire *why*, the professor himself enquired if it was possible that knowledge of the Latin language was no longer required at Harvard College!

Such were the ways of his indirect but powerful contributions to constructive theology. The classroom was his proper place and his arena, his open storeroom, his academic living-room. It was also occasionally his dissecting room, and his rumpus room!

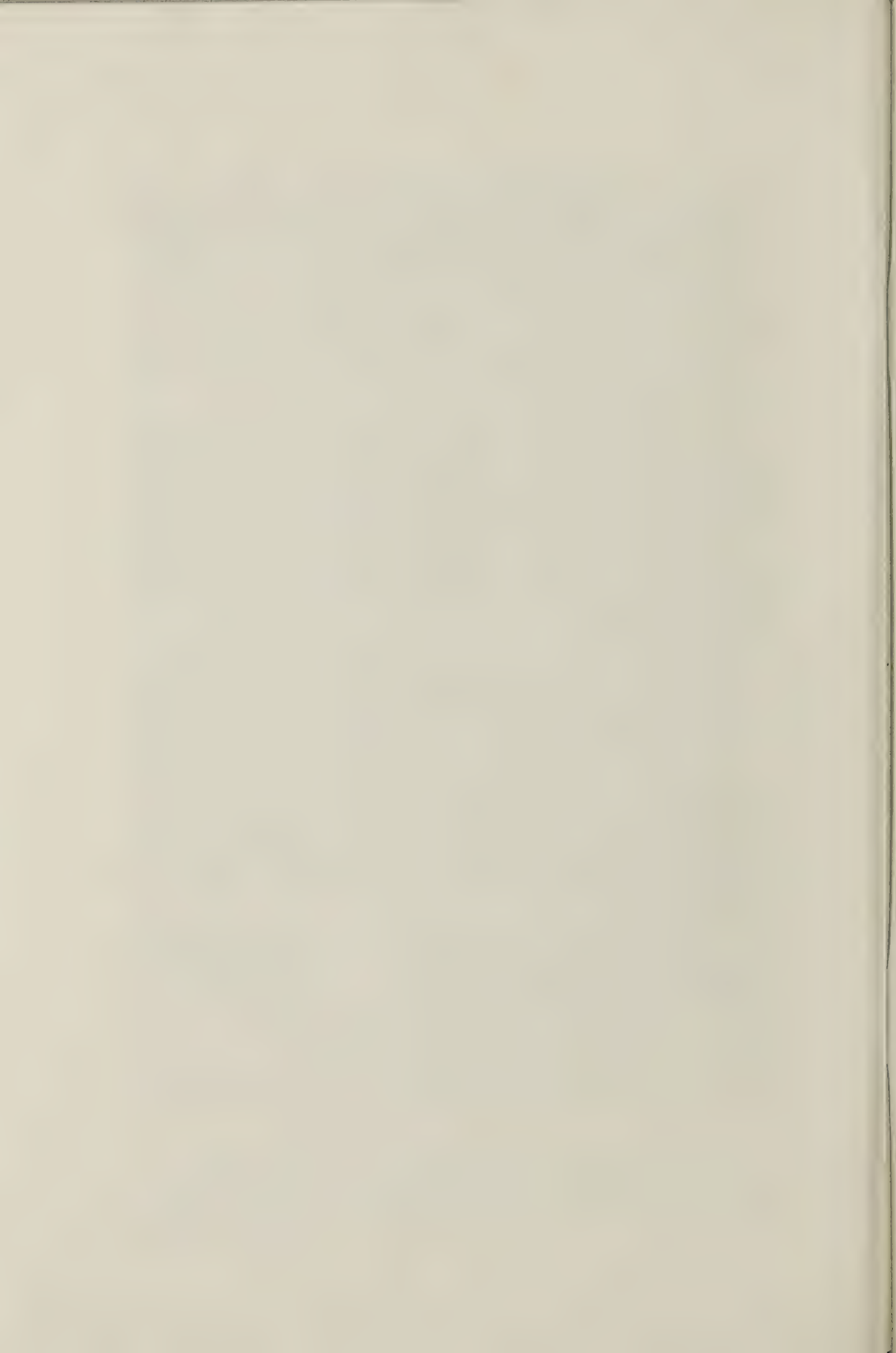
What the classroom was for students, the Faculty Common was for colleagues. When philosophical categories presumed to transmit without remainder the full statement and reality of the Faith, Professor Pauck reminded the protagonist of the importance of his historical omissions. When spirituality became oceanic, Professor Pauck would define and specify with the acerbity of a Pius XII. Indeed, this man's contribution to Christian theology is more aptly put in the analogy of the linebacker than in the analogy of the ball-carrier. Possessed of large and apparently instantly available knowledge of historical fact and force, he ranged right and left behind the line, *a constructive menace*.

In speaking as I have, I have sought to clarify and illustrate the reality of the man in his role as teacher. But the role, no matter with what energy and fulness one pours himself into it, is not the man—entire. There has always been about Wilhelm Pauck a quiet reserve not coterminous with that open and candid comradeship so evident, so delightful, and so genuine. What lives and sustains him *there* is his business and God's; but the knowledge that it *is* there is a precious part of his gift to us all. A flash of it came out only infrequently; and I shall conclude by relating a memory of such a moment.

The occasion was a field-seminar composed of six professors and about a dozen advanced students in theology. The matter for discussion was the theology of a then current book—analyzing the perils to all levels of human relationships posed by the conflicting claims of modern life. A representative of the then abounding personality sciences read a paper in which the position was taken that virtually anything is acceptable in human relations if the force of its components is properly measured. In the discussion Professor Pauck was quiet, but his deepening anger was rising. When he did say something it was but a sentence. With a sharpness unusual when among his colleagues he asked, "Is there no place in all of this for plain fidelity?"

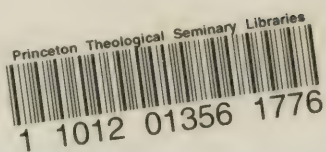
No man may warrant another's center, but I thought I caught a glimpse of it then: fidelity to learning, to a chosen discipline, to persons, to one's hidden but lived-out confession.







Wilhelm Pauck, 1977 (at UTS)



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